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# POEMS

BY

MAURICE THOMPSON



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MAIN

TO MY WIFE

*Songs of a mocking-bird  
Translated carefully,  
Golden note by golden word ;  
Th' original melody  
Imitated phrase by phrase,  
As heard in dewy dawn-lit ways  
Of Freedom's solitudes  
Down by the sea in the springtime woods.  
Read them and heed them,  
As if you heard  
Prophecy out of the throat of a bird.*

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## POEMS

### IN CAPTIVITY.

You ask me why  
I long to fly  
Out from your palace to the dreamy woods  
And the summer solitudes,  
Why I pine  
In this cage of mine,  
Why I fret,  
Why I set  
All manner of querulous echoes fluttering forth  
From the cold North  
And wandering Southward with beseeching  
pain  
In every strain.

Ask me not,  
Task me not  
With such vain questions, but fling wide the  
door,

And hinder me no more ;  
Give back my wings to me,  
And the wild currents of my liberty !

I pant,  
I faint ;  
I die  
For the trees so high  
And the broad fields of luscious cane  
And the grassy plain  
And the red tiled villages so old and dull,  
Where (through the unkempt gardens rung)  
The timbre of the Creole tongue  
Makes every close so beautiful.

Oh, if you please,  
Give me release !  
Open the gate  
Of this cage of Fate  
And let me mount the south wind and go  
down  
To Bay Saint Louis town,  
Where the brown bees hum  
In amber mists of pollen and perfume ;  
And the roses gush abloom !



There in the oleander groves,  
With drooping wings my dear mate moves  
    And wonders why I stay  
    So long, so long away,  
    While the spring in fervid prime  
    Has waxed to nesting time,  
And the air once more, in pungent ecstasy,  
    Whirls the wasp and butterfly,  
    Flings the orange petals high,  
And wrings a racy thrill from every tree !

    My memory turns  
    To a place of vines and ferns  
    And a cabin daubed with clay,  
    Where many a day  
And many a sweet night long,  
In the old fig-tree and the scuppernong,  
I made the whole world wonder at my song.

    There the restless air  
Flung bubbling waves of freshness to and fro,  
    Where  
The great japonica blossoms gleamed like  
    snow,  
    While from the cabin's eaves

And from the waxen leaves  
The long gray moss fell down,  
Trailing like a gown.

The cabin was a home  
Where naught but peace and happiness could  
come :

The floor was earth,  
Well drained and cool, with loamy odor fine,  
And on its hearth  
Burned cedar boughs and knots of resinous pine  
That filled the place with tender, balmy heat,  
When the stout housewife broiled the juicy  
meat  
And brewed the coffee bright and clear as  
wine.

There was a path down to a broad bayou,  
Whose waters blue  
The master of the cabin loved to sail,  
In breeze or gale,  
And overhead  
The huge arms of an ancient live-oak spread  
On high  
Between the roof-rib and the violet sky.

A rout

Of noisy, wild, black children, in and out,  
Ran and tumbled, leaped and sang,  
Till the brakes and thickets rang

With the joy

Of girl and boy,

Who feel (and yet know not) what perfect bliss  
The careless way of utter freedom is.

In the dusk of eve I heard

(Sweeter than voice of any singing bird,  
Or strain of flute, or breathing of hautbois)

The ditties in patois

Warbled by two voices rich and deep,  
When the brood of children had been lulled to  
sleep,

And man and wife sat by the cabin door,

With the rose-vine drooping o'er,  
And the leaf-sounds creeping in  
With a rippling soft and thin.

Ho !

A banjo !

Never was other music quite so good  
For the night and the solitude,

And the fragrant, fruity silence of a Southern  
wood,  
And the black man's humble lot,  
With its curves of simple thought,  
Rounded to such rich fragments of conceit  
As only nature's genius may complete.

Meantime, steadily,  
In the night-light vague and high,  
Angles of water-fowl winnowed the purple  
sky,  
Clanging their trumpet-notes  
As if from brazen throats,  
And seeming to fan the star-dust with their  
wings,  
And the breeze was like a flute,  
(A Pan-flute in the reeds) blown by the lips  
hirsute  
Of the jovial god who loves to be where the  
humblest minstrel sings.

Love-music and love-song,  
Half-heathen and half-Christian, racy, strong,  
Vibrant with joy, flooded with humor droll,  
And rich with yearnings of the human soul,

Washed round and over me  
And my sweet mate, brooding silently,  
    On her nest in the old fig tree —  
    Oh !  
    Open the gate and let me go !

    Elusive hints  
    And wavering tints  
    Of citron blooms,  
And orange foliage and the soft perfumes  
Of violet and acacia come to me  
On some stray current, and I hear the sea  
    Foaming and warm,  
    After a storm  
    And a rain,  
Softening down to sleep and dreams again,  
With the pelicans a-wing,  
And the white gulls hovering,  
And the great globe caught in the balmy palms  
    of Spring !

    I long to be once more,  
    On the warm Gulf-shore,  
In the dark magnolia foliage hidden quite,  
With the foam-capped waves in sight,

And the vessels, wing by wing,  
Gleaming and wavering  
On the far horizon line,  
And the sun, right overhead,  
Flaring red,  
And flooding with flame divine  
The deep blue hollow of the sky,  
And gilding the vagrant gulf-caps gloriously.  
Oh, the shimmer and the sheen  
On the bay and the myrtle green !  
Oh, the keen bouquet  
From the wax-berry fruit !  
Oh, wafts that stray  
O'er vines all wine from top to root !  
Oh, the dull red gold in the lemon-tree !  
Oh, open the cage and let me go !

Free me or I die,  
Give me sweet liberty,  
Whose every pulse was mine so long ago,  
Down by the sea.  
I feel — I feel so faint, my heart beats low,  
My throat is dry and harsh —  
Oh, give me back my thicket by the marsh !

Let me see the herons wade  
In the watery glade,  
And let me see the water-fowl go by  
Glimmering against the sky.

Fainter, fainter — so,  
My life-stream sinks — runs low.

Oh !

Oh !

Open the cage and let me go,  
Floating, dreaming, reveling, dying, down  
To my mate, my queen, my love  
In the fragrant, drowsy grove  
Beyond the flowery closes of Bay Saint Louis  
town.

TO AN ENGLISH NIGHTINGALE.

HEAR !

Hear !

Oh, will you hear ?

Reed-notes clear,

(Fluted in flowery, May-drowsed solitudes,

Filtered through sun-steeped woods)

A challenge hurled

To all the singing world !

I, the mocking bird,

Am stirred

With song's wild rapture ; and the prophet's  
mood

Grows stronger in me with each freer breath

Of balm-buds sweet as meth ;

I am no singer rude ;

Here, drink my melody, spiced with things as  
good

As made the bragget that old Chaucer brewed.



Or if Villon  
You dote upon,  
I have his note and more,  
And Ronsard's best in store,  
Caught from a gay garçon  
Who sang them clear and strong,  
On Bayou Teche,  
With a Creole dash  
In his voice and the brim of the hat he wore !

What cheer !  
What cheer !  
That is the cardinal grosbeak's way,  
With his sooty face and his coat so red ;  
Too shrill, too red, too loud and gay  
(Top-knotted like a jay),  
Too crude for the critical eye and ear !  
In a wild plum-thicket of Tennessee  
He flung a challenge out to me,  
And, as Marsyas, easily  
Beaten and flayed alive was he.

Cheer ! Cheer !  
What cheer !  
Oh, all the world shall be glad to hear !

And the nightingale  
 Shall fail  
 When I burst forth with my freedom-song  
 So rich and strong !

Oh !  
 Ho !  
 That 's a brown thrush  
 In the underbrush.  
 Conceited, self-conscious, inclined to gush,  
 His is a voice that will not wear ;  
 Faulty timbre and volume weak,  
 He wrings from his beak  
 A spiral squeak  
 That bores like a gimlet through the air !  
 And the catbird, too,  
 With its feline mew,  
 Is only fit for the springe and the snare !

I like  
 The shrike,  
 Because, with a thorn for a guillotine,  
 He does his work so well and clean,  
 A critic keen —  
 A practical bird,

Whose common sense  
Must be immense,  
For, tell me, who has ever heard  
Of such a thing  
As a loggerhead shrike that tried to sing?  
Hear! See! Oh, see!  
What do you think of me?  
Do I sing by rote,  
Or by note?  
Have I a parrot's echo-throat?  
Oh no! I caught my strains  
From Nature's freshest veins.

Where blows  
The Cherokee rose  
Amidst Floridian hills, a slave I heard  
Halloo across a green tobacco field,  
And sing as gleeful as a brook or bird,  
The whiles a heavy hoe his hand did wield;  
I mixed his tune  
With the heat of June,  
And sang it  
And rang it  
By the slow Aucilla  
And the deep Sattilla

14    *TO AN ENGLISH NIGHTINGALE*

In groves of palm and pine by tropic breezes  
    stirred,  
And all the world has heard.

    Mine is the voice of Spring,  
My home is the land of the new,  
    And every note I sing  
Is fresh as the morning dew ;  
For I am Freedom's bird  
    Whom the Pilgrim Fathers heard,  
    In their dreams of liberty,  
Calling them to the dark wild woods across the  
    Western sea !

    Not a mere mimic I,  
    That is a courtly lie  
To give precedence to the nightingale  
Bred in a classic vale,  
    Shadowed by ruins old and dim.  
Give me a tilt at him !  
    Prestige of fame ?  
Romance of ages in his name ?

    What care I !  
That bird shall die

And lie  
My countless list of slain among,  
On the flowery field of song !

He  
A match for me !  
No more than a wren or a chickadee !  
Mine is the voice of the young and strong,  
Mine the soul of the brave and the free !

But I can pipe the oldest runes  
And trill the rarest tunes  
Of every tongue in which song's perfume is.  
Each swell I know,  
Each quaver low,  
The precious rhymes and rhythmic ecstasies  
Dreamed of by master-bards long dead  
And buried ;  
And in my treasure  
The lightest measure,  
Rondeau, ballade, or virelay,  
To music set,  
Can match the vagabond troubadour's mandore  
fret for fret,  
And in a key more gay  
My triolet !

16    *TO AN ENGLISH NIGHTINGALE*

And when night's vast and shadowy urn  
    Overbrims with dreams  
I stir the vales of sleep with my nocturne ;  
    Slowly, tenderly  
    Outflow its rippling streams  
To blend with Night's still sea of mystery ;  
The pungent savor of the dewy buds,  
The coolness and the languor of old woods,  
    And the slow murmur of the darkling rills  
    My art distills  
Into a subtle philter, wild, intense,  
    Of tenuous melody  
    And slumbrous harmony,  
Blown round the dusky hills,  
Through fragrant fruity tropic thickets dense,  
    Lingering and lapsing on,  
    And lost before the dawn !

    Higher !  
    Higher !  
    I aspire  
    To Freedom's fullest note ;  
The vigor of waxing birdhood thrills my throat ;  
Morn's wide horizon, rimmed with fervid fire,  
    Broadens my hope

And sets far limitations to the scope

Of my desire !

Cage me not !

Enrage me not !

Confine me to no purfled garden-plot :

My song must grow, as grows the plant or  
tree,

Out of the sun, and earth, and winds of Liberty !

Upon no vast

Dead past

I turn my eyes ;

But every budding moment's blossom I fore-  
cast,

And take each day's new melodies by sur-  
prise.

I leap to meet fresh weather,

And feel through every feather

The first delicious foretaste of a change ;

I test the range

Of Nature's every franchise, every tether !

Dream on, O nightingale !

Old things shall fade and fail,

And the glory of the past shall not avail

18 *TO AN ENGLISH NIGHTINGALE*

Against the Future, all-encompassing,  
Whose prophet and whose poet I would be,  
Whose promise and whose meaning I shall  
see,  
Whose fires shall flame in every note I sing !



TO AN ENGLISH SKYLARK.

OH,  
How I long to go,  
On a seaward-blowing breeze,  
To the garden of the seas —  
To brave King Arthur's land,  
To that fair island Alfred made so free,  
To the haunt of chivalry,  
Where master-birds sang (in the days of song)  
So long  
And strong !  
Oh let me dwell a space by Avon's tide,  
Or hide  
In some old grove, where still a note may  
linger  
Of Herrick's flute,  
Of Sidney's lute,  
Or of some precious rondel voiced by a for-  
gotten singer.



Hark !

Even now I hear a lark,  
The lark of England's ripe and mellow story,  
The lark of England's fallow fields of glory,  
    Springing,  
    Singing,  
Far and high in heaven's remotest blue,  
    His wings still cool with dew,  
His voice (of which one song-god fair and  
    young  
A lyric of immortal fervor sung)  
    Still firm and true,  
Still rich with exultation, rising higher,  
    And brimming with desire,  
To fill ethereal vastness with its fire ;  
Forgetting love and sympathy and that law  
    Of human harmony  
    And rhythmic destiny,  
Which darkly through a glass the seers and  
    prophets saw !

O bird,

Whom gods and heroes heard  
Sing in the far dim twilight hours of Time,  
Whose rapture stirred

Through many a new sweet rhyme  
    Whilst thou didst rise  
    Into the skies  
To purify thy song in empyrean fire !  
    Say where  
    In upper air  
Dost hope to find fulfillment of thy dream ?  
On what far peak seest thou a morning-gleam ?  
Why shall the stars still blind thee unaware ?  
    Why needst thou mount to sing ?  
Why seek the sun's fierce-tempered glow and  
    glare ?  
Why shall a soulless impulse prompt thy wing ?  
Why are thy meadows and thy groves bereft  
Of Freedom's inspiration, and so left  
    To silence in mid-spring ?

O lark !

I mark,

Since Shelley died, thy wings have somewhat  
    failed.

A precious note has faded from thy hymn,  
Thy lyric fire has smouldered low and dim !  
Nor ever have thy cloud-wrapt strains availed  
Against the will of tyrants and the dark,

Strong doors of prisons grim,  
And shackles manifold,  
And dungeons cold,  
Wherein sweet Freedom lies  
With hopeless longing in her starry eyes  
And lifeless languor on her splendid wings !

I hold

This truth as gold :

The grandest life is lowliest ; he who sings  
To fill the highest purpose need not soar  
Above the lintel of the peasant's door,  
And must not hunger for the praise of kings,  
Or quench his thirst at too ethereal springs.

As for me

My life is liberty,

And close to earth's bloom-scented, fragrant  
floor

I gather more and more

The larger elements,

The fine suggestions of Time's last events ;

I strive to know

Whither all currents flow ;

I sing

On branches that the newest breezes swing ;

I overreach  
The limit of the present, day by day ;  
I teach  
By shrewd anticipation, and foresay  
What wider life is coming,  
What joys are humming,  
Like Hybla's bees, around the Future's comb ;  
My home  
Is where all wind-tides and all perfumes meet ;  
Cool and clean and sweet  
The young leaves rustle round my sensitive  
feet,  
Whilst my enraptured tongue  
Rolls under it  
Morsels of all the songs the world's best bards  
have sung !

Lo ! Homer's strength is mine,  
And Sappho's fire divine.  
And old Anacreon's flask of purple wine  
Stains every note  
Blown from the silvery labyrinth of my charmèd  
throat !  
And yet the past  
Has nothing in it glorious as the vast

Hope that the future holds,  
Of life whose flame enfolds  
The final focal thought —  
The meed for which the grandest souls from  
Time's first dawn have wrought.

Erewhile I lived  
Where Liberty pined and grieved,  
Under the sunniest of all sunny skies,  
In a rich-fruited, dreamy, slumbrous paradise ;  
Low  
And slow  
The tide of human sympathy did ebb and flow.  
At length, one day,  
I heard a bloodhound bay ;  
The swamps were Freedom's sanctuary then ;  
Year after year  
I sang the slave to cheer,  
And sang to fire the hearts of earnest, freeborn  
men,  
Until the new day broke,  
With the lifting of the yoke,  
And in broad floods of sudden light divine,  
I saw the slave to manhood's summit rise,  
His vision set on farthest destinies,  
And the slave cabin like a palace shine.

Oh, what a bliss  
This love of Freedom is !  
And what delight  
To feel, by day and night,  
Its ecstasy run deeper in my blood  
While life's strong tide swells toward its highest flood !  
Not in the sky  
Where wastes of grandeur lie,  
May genius find wherewith to slake its thirst ;  
The rainbow is not first  
On Beauty's list,  
Nor is the enchantment of heaven's highest mist  
The master maker's aim !  
The lowliest hearth-stone flame  
Is worthier of worship than the sun !  
The patter of bare brown feet that dance and run  
With childish grace on the roughest cabin floor,  
And the poor mother's happy smile, are more  
Than starry hosts  
And lofty ghosts  
And awful phantoms born of overwrought  
And soulless travail on the heights of thought !

26      *TO AN ENGLISH SKYLARK*

Come down, O Lark, to earth,  
And give a new song birth —  
The song of life that grants its sweets to all,  
In hut and lofty hall ;  
Forsake the sky,  
And sky-born melody ;  
Fill thy meadow and thy grove  
With a strain of human love —  
With a wide strong pulse of music for the  
waiting ears of men,  
Who, to be born again,  
And live the life of freedom that I live,  
More than their lives would give ;  
Yea,  
Would slay,  
And heap vast hecatombs, and flood  
The world with blood,  
And jar  
Heaven with the thunder,  
And the wonder  
And the awful weltering whirlwind of the storm  
of war !  
  
Oh, ere it is too late,  
Take heed, and contemplate



What tempests sleep,  
That yet will wake and leap  
Across thy starry fields and blot them out,  
And drown thy voice in their uproarious shout !

Thou art too high ;  
No longing ear or eye  
May follow thee, nor is thy sweetest note  
Echoed by mortal throat ;  
But ever it goes forth with none to hear  
And none to catch its cheer !

Come sit beside me now,  
Here on my orange-bough ;  
Forsake the legendary lights,  
Forget the old hereditary heights,  
And we will pipe one lusty score together

Wing by wing,  
In this land of spring,  
While all the world comes out to feel the  
weather  
Throb with the fire of Freedom as we sing !

BEFORE SUNRISE.

MID foliage green and gold,  
And bloom-sprays manifold,

I feel

The fragrance of eternal freshness steal  
Forth from the rising day,

And far away,

Like the murmuring of a stream,

Or a lute-chord in a dream,

On the horizon stirs

The rich and rapturous anthem of the Future's  
choristers.

How it flows

And grows !

On its notes

What triumph floats !

Before it earth is gladdened and the sea is like  
a rose.

The dawn

Is coming on —

Sweeter,  
Fleeter,  
In rhythms and rhymes and ripples flow the  
rays.

The high,  
Blue, boundless, splendid sky  
Flares like a rimpled blaze  
Of sympathy divine.

A rare  
Bouquet upon the air,  
As if of mellow wine  
Out of old flagons bursting,  
Sets the whole world wildly thirsting.  
The ships leap  
On the fragrant breezy deep,  
And the broad fields are billowy with grains.  
The great mills roar ;  
Earth's veins of wealth outpour,  
And tireless engines pierce the hills and crash  
across the plains.

Hurled  
Around the world,  
The lightning-bolts of man's best words to  
man

Burn chains in two,  
Turn old things new ;  
And, flung back from the trumpets in the van  
To the dull, listless ear  
Of the straggler in the rear,  
Come precious notes blown on the dewy rim  
Of the morning cool and dim.

Hist !

Ere the strain is whist,  
A voice, out of the dawn's vague, rosy mist :  
Pure as God's highest fire  
The worker's golden hire ;  
And the home he makes with it,  
And the peace he takes with it  
To wife and children, are reward as fair  
As soul can compass or as love can bear.

O brothers all ! come near  
And hear  
A bird's  
Melodious dreaming set to words,  
And flung  
The spring's new leaves and tender buds  
among,

For very joy of life, and hope, and love,  
In a world made broad enough  
For all God's creatures to be merry in,  
With joyous clash and din,  
And yet too small  
For any greed at all !  
Lo ! deep and sure  
Is cut this truth in heaven's book of gold :  
*Out of one mother in the garden old*  
*Were born the rich and poor.*

O ditcher in the mire !  
O stoker by the fire,  
And driver on the engine flying far,  
And brakeman on the car !  
O moulder, strong and grim !  
O longshoreman, and open-hearted tar,  
And pilot, tough and true !  
O miner in the coal-shaft damp and dim !  
O factory girl with eyes serenely blue,  
And cheerful matron washing clothes for hire !  
O all who work and suffer and aspire !  
Give ear !  
Look up, and hear  
And make thine own

This song, out of the future blown  
So keen and clear : —  
O pure of heart and faithful, hand in hand,  
The strong, the weak, the great and small  
shall stand  
Upright and free in Freedom's favored land,  
And know  
That howso blow  
The winds of chance and change,  
Onward and upward every step shall  
go,  
And farther and freer every soul shall range !

How good  
This universal bond of brotherhood,  
And all this wide,  
Strong, equal-flowing tide  
Of human love and human charity  
Foaming and heat-flushed as the rosy flood of  
some deep tropic sea !

No ?  
Not so ? —  
As I swing  
And sing,

I hear a myriad voices answer mine,  
From the oak woods and the pine,  
From the seas and from the lakes,  
    From the brakes,  
From the cities and the shops,  
From the mines and the mountain-tops,  
    From field and fold,  
Out of hot Southern marsh and Northern prairie cold,  
    All murmuring : " We are poor ;  
    How long shall we endure  
    This burden that we bear  
    And the iron chains we wear ?  
    What is freedom but a name ?  
What lot have we but poverty, — but shame ?  
    Are we not slaves and worse ?  
Life is to us a bitter, burning curse ! "

O brothers, though you grope  
For the lowest rung of hope ;  
O sisters, though you weep  
In darkness doubly deep,  
    And cry  
From out foul pits of deepest misery,  
    Or lie  
Dying in poverty,

Yet see on lofty places  
Broad splendors and grand dreams  
Flashing from fervent eyes and godlike faces,  
Whereon the favor of Heaven divinely beams,  
    Envy not,  
    Nor curse your lot ;  
For lo ! the best of all  
God's gifts on you shall fall,  
And your hearts shall overbrim  
With ecstatic praise to Him !

    Yea,  
    Deny it as you may,  
    The dawn  
    Is coming on,  
And the heights must feel the glow  
    Before the valleys low ;  
    But the great midday  
    Will strike  
    The peaks and vales alike  
    And they  
Who in life's hollows stay  
    Shall feel the heat divine,  
When the strong noon sun shall shine  
    At the zenith clear and high  
    Of a just and liberal sky !



In some manger cold,  
In some hovel mean and lone  
That the beasts would scorn to hold,  
Laughs the babe that shall be king,  
Whilst on a blazing throne  
Sits an abject, hopeless thing  
Silent and shivering !

O poor !  
God's promises are sure ;  
High  
As the starry sky  
Is your children's destiny ;  
And broad  
And giant-waved and tempest-bearing, like the  
sea,  
Is the flood  
That shall come roaring, leaping,  
Over earth and sweeping  
The horses, chariots, hosts and homes, banners  
and citadel  
Of earth's tyrants into hell !

O king ! O lord ! O usurer !  
O rich man's heart that no heart's cry can stir !  
What gold may bar the path

Of the storm-flood and the whirlwind of God's  
wrath?

What ships with iron mail,  
What steel-girt fortress, what hired army  
strong,

Intrenched in wrong,  
With bristling guns and bayonets shall avail  
Against the crushing missiles of God's ven-  
geance sent

Out of the raging, rent, and foaming firmament?

It is sweet, sweet, sweet,  
(I hear a million voices in unison repeat)  
This vengeance that is coming on the world,  
When the lofty shall lie low  
And the blood of kings shall flow  
In rivers round the thrones in fragments  
hurled ;

When the rich shall writhe and groan,  
Starving in deserts lone,  
When the palaces shall fall  
On the lords and ladies all,  
And pestilence shall stalk  
Where the money-lenders walk,  
And all the heavenly blue shall be a bloody  
pall.

Peace !

Cease !

Such thoughts as these  
Send all their harshness hissing through my  
song  
And do my voice irreparable wrong.

Blown clear,  
As glass through fire,  
Let breath of love grow sweeter year by year ;  
Blown farther, higher,  
The bugle-call of Hope still guide us on,  
Until at last  
The night is past,  
And, rushing to the zenith from the dawn,  
We see the sun pour light of life on all,  
And hear a voice out of near heaven fall,  
Saying to those who in the caves and lonely  
hollows dwell :  
“ Come forth, I am thy God, and all is well ! ”

Ah, well ! All well !  
In greening grove and dell  
Hear how my song of love goes ringing on !  
I am the prophet true,  
My words are fresh as dew,

And lo ! I say that it is morning time !  
No more the darkness and the hideous rime  
Of tyranny  
Shall compass land and sea ;  
But, flaming o'er the world,  
God's glorious flag of peace shall be unfurled,  
And God's sweet law of liberty shall make all  
nations free !

## TO PROvence.

PROvence, where love and rhyme  
Sweetened one throb of time ;  
Provence, whose voice is dead,  
Whose rose-tree vanishèd ;  
Provence, old broken *broc*,  
Whose melodious *Langue d'oc*,  
Like sweet wine spilled and gone,  
Has left a fragrance ever lingering on ;  
Whose nightingale finds no new song to sing, —  
I, a wild bird upon the outer rim  
Of a young choir, this sunrise carol fling  
Across thine ashes and thy ruins dim !

Provence,  
This new song in my mouth  
Is of the younger South,  
Bright with the dawn of Freedom's renaissance,  
The South that has no care  
For the sad, grim cavalier,  
Dreaming of flaunting flag and crashing lance,

And all unmindful of the day and year  
Whereon the world took leave of old romance.

The South whose gaze is cast  
No more upon the past,  
But whose bright eyes the skies of promise  
sweep,  
Whose feet in paths of progress swiftly leap ;  
And whose fresh thoughts, like cheerful rivers  
run,  
Through odorous ways to meet the morning  
sun !

Gone is thy troubadour,  
Gone the soft clamor of thy *cour d'amour*,  
Rondeau, ballade, chanson ;  
And the plaudits that they won  
Echo no more along the sheeny Rhone.  
All desolate ! And why is this ?  
Where is that splendid thing  
That leaped from thee on many-colored wing ?  
Thou lifeless chrysalis !

Remembered as a dream,  
Thy soft song glories seem

To hover on Time's outmost purple bound ;  
Thy hautbois and guitar —  
They touch us with the merest film of sound !

Provence,  
Wafts of thy *gaie science*  
Still lightly pass, whereto we do not know,  
Like some frail, fine perfume,  
From a paradise of bloom  
Fallen to golden dust five hundred years ago !

Thou art the old, dead South,  
Given over unto drouth ;  
Given over unto memory, unto dust,  
Unto mildew, unto must,  
With a false smack of chivalry in thy mouth,  
Mumbling, in false pride, thy miserable crust !

My South, too, was dead,  
And on her corse the ghoul of slavery fed ;  
But the resurrection came,  
And a new life leaped, like flame,  
In every breast !  
Oh, it was joy to see  
The slave ride down the lists of Liberty,

With shining shield and leveled lance in rest,  
His swart face lifted high,  
His eyes on destiny,  
While Lincoln's hand erased the inscription  
old  
Of the nation's palimpsest,  
And wrote thereon, in words of fire and  
gold,  
Freedom, from North to South, from East to  
West!

Ah! what was dust  
Is dew!  
And what was rust  
Is new!  
The breath of death is gone,  
And life goes pouring on  
In a bright flood.  
No more  
The cannon's roar,  
And the blue sky is tinged no more with blood,  
Whilst from the mountains to the shining sea,  
The peace of morning evermore shall be!

Provence, turn, turn away,  
From thy long yesterday,



And see how fair to-morrow's promise shines !

What is the past but death ?

How fresh the Future's breath !

Awake. 'T is morn. Thy orchards and thy  
vines

Are rich with bloom,

The mistral throbs ecstatic with perfume,

And fans to flame thine ashes with its wings !

Lo, the Republic makes

Life out of death, and takes

Even ruin captive with the song it sings !

## TO SAPPHO.

NOTE. — The italicized parts of this poem are translations of the Fragments of Sappho, and I have thought to weave them in as echoes, in the true mocking bird manner.

UP from the Caribbean  
The wind comes like a pæan,  
As on my fragrant orange-bough I swing,  
Dreaming, and wondering,  
And piping Sapphic fragments o'er and o'er.

Along the shore  
The surf foams madly and the breakers roar.  
Strange odors from afar,  
Spice, amber, nard, and tar,  
And Lesbian roses grown in Mitylene,  
And violet breath, and waft of myrtle green,  
Steep me in visions passionate and wild,  
Of love, all undefiled,  
Whereby was Sappho's bright  
Rose garden of delight,  
Flooded with starry splendors of old night !

A bower of June,  
With morning freshness lingering after noon  
Upon the petals of the passion-rose ;  
*All round through apple boughs the cool air blows,*  
*Shaking soft slumber down the dusky leaves,*  
Where still the subtle violet-weaver weaves !

Eden of Love's own choice,  
    Haunted of Love's own voice,  
Thy ways I could not take —  
Nay, not for Sappho's sake,  
    And leave my orange grove  
And the fresh promise of the land I love !  
    Liberty,  
    Wild liberty,  
Not license, give to me !  
Give me the glory of what is to come —  
Fill me with prophecy — the mighty hum  
Of swarming years and wonders yet to be !  
And still, O Sappho ! still I turn and sigh  
That all but these stray notes of all thy songs  
    should die ;  
That these chance fragments old,  
Of things more golden than the virgin gold,  
To music set beyond all melody,

Have come to me,  
Of all thy treasure, blown across the sea !

Mad maid of Mitylene,  
Song-slave, song-mistress, and song-queen !  
Bless'd the nightingale  
Whom thou didst sing  
And hail

As tender messenger of Spring !

Sappho, oh thou —

*Sweet-apple on the bough,*

*Yea, blushing on the top spray of the tree,  
Whom all the apple gatherers failed to see,  
Nay, saw, but could not reach, and cannot now,  
Thy song perforce will fill my throat  
And burn it with each golden, molten note !*

Who knows thee best

Knows never peace or rest,  
And yet his every thought  
Is a joy from Heaven caught ;  
And his heart-flower open blows  
Like a dark red Lesbian rose !

*God-like he thrones himself, who sits by thee,  
And feels the dear delirium of thy words,  
And of thy laughter hears the tender chords !*

*The vision thrills my heart ; for if I see,  
In merest glimpse, thy form, my voice fails me,  
My tongue is numb, with fire my blood is shot,  
My ears hum, and my straining eyes see not,  
My frame, bedewed with madness, quivereth  
And, paler than pale grass, I look like death !*

Oh, not in wanton whirls  
Thy singing bevy sweet  
Danced round thee on charmed feet,  
Oh, blessèd girls !  
Who felt thy song-breath on their shining curls  
And thy fierce flame of longing in their veins !  
What delicate, deep, delicious bitterness,  
What stress  
Of overmastering, sad ecstasy within  
Each quivering heart ! What glorious din  
Of girlish voices and love-smitten lyres !  
What incense from what all-consuming fires !

O Sappho, didst thou sing  
This haunting, saddening thing ? —  
*Ever shalt thou lie dead,  
No more rememberèd,  
Since no Pierian roses blew for thee,*

*Unnoticed mid the shadows dim and dread,  
Alone in the hereafter shalt thou be !*

Didst thou mean me ?

But what care I ?

I shall not die,

For Liberty lends to me her deathless wing ;  
My land is the eternal home of spring,  
Beyond all clouds my purple dome of sky,  
The nations hunger for the songs I sing  
Making the New World's groves with Free-  
dom's transports ring !

Naught have I for the tomb,  
Blooming, as centuries bloom,  
Fairer with each new day,

No petal of my song-flower shall decay !

Not so with thine,

Veined like the lily's, as the rose's fine ;  
Plucked by the vulgar hand of comedy,  
They scent the desert dust and sweeten all the  
sea !

Pressed thin between the pages

Of the torn book of ages,

Suggestive of what fragrant thoughts it is

To find a bloom like this :

*Last night I spoke with Venus in my dream !*

Ah, in what bower of bliss,  
By what Pan-haunted stream,  
Didst thou the lips of Aphrodite kiss ?

What *bitter-sweet*

*Wild love shook thee from head to feet,*

*And tore thy breast,*

*Like a wind that rends the oak-tree on the moun-  
tain's crest ?*

What garland didst thou wear ?

And who was Althis fair,

*Loved once, loved madly, loved so long ago ?*

And oh !

*For whom didst thou lie lonesome when the moon  
had set,*

*And the Pleiades were down ?*

What purple gown

Didst thou quit wearing when thy love came  
not ?

And (O delicate thought !)

For thy lost girlhood crying all in vain,

What strange, wild joys were caught

And tangled in thy pain ?

Far in the night,  
When the moon sails high and white,  
In the rich, dark firmament,  
And the sea-wind is spent,  
And the magnolia's heavy flowers are hung,  
Like ghastly death-bells waiting to be rung,  
I yearn  
In a low, many-toned, deep, sweet nocturne,  
To guess,  
And so express,  
The lost notes that, once stricken from thy  
lyre,  
Touched all the world with fiery tenderness,  
And filled the air with veins of tender fire ;  
But of my longing *cometh unto me*  
*Never the bubbling honey, nor the honey-bee !*

Nay,  
Never tongue may say  
What founts of inspiration and delight  
Forsook the day, what stars shrank from the  
night,  
When all thy songs,  
Torn into shreds and smirched with foulest  
wrongs,



Were scattered,  
Battered,  
Bruised, and so left to lie  
In places lone and high,  
*Dark petals of a hyacinth, odorous still,*  
*Crushed by rude feet on many a windy hill!*

## PROEM.

THOUGH I am poor, and cannot buy  
The rare, time-mellowed things of Art,  
God keeps an open gallery  
Of glories for the poor in heart,  
Whose walls are hung with grander show  
Of color than old Titian knew,  
With outlines Michael Angelo  
Wronged in the best cartoons he drew !

All this is mine to have and hold :  
Nor fire may burn, nor years may soil,  
With ruthless trace of gathering mould,  
These wonders of the Master's toil ;  
Nor can some restless child of Fate,  
Some darkly gifted Corsican,  
By red successes decorate  
His Louvre from my Vatican !

## AN EARLY BLUEBIRD.

LEAP to the highest height of spring,  
And trill thy sweetest note,  
Bird of the heavenly plumes and twinkling  
wing  
And silver-toned throat !

Sing, while the maple's deepest root  
Thrills with a pulse of fire  
That lights its buds. Blow, blow thy tender  
flute,  
Thy reed of rich desire !

Breathe in thy syrinx Freedom's breath,  
Quaver the fresh and true,  
Dispel this lingering wintry mist of death  
And charm the world anew !

Thou first sky-dipped spring-bud of song,  
Whose heavenly ecstasy

Foretells the May while yet March winds are  
strong,  
Fresh faith appears with thee !

How sweet, how magically rich,  
Through filmy splendor blown,  
Thy hopeful voice set to the promise-pitch  
Of melody yet unknown !

O land of mine (where hope can grow  
And send a deeper root  
With every spring), hear, heed the free bird  
blow  
Hope's charm'd flute !

Ah ! who will hear, and who will care,  
And who will heed thy song,  
As prophecy, as hope, as promise rare,  
Budding to bloom ere long ?

From swelling bulbs and sprouting seed,  
Sweet sap and fragrant dew,  
And human hearts, grown doubly warm at  
need,  
Leaps answer strong and true :

We see, we hear (thou liberty-loving thing,  
That down spring winds doth float),  
The promise of thine empyrean wing,  
The hope that floods thy throat !



## A PRELUDE.

SPIRIT that moves the sap in spring,  
When lusty male birds fight and sing,  
Inform my words, and make my lines  
As sweet as flowers, as strong as vines.

Let mine be the freshening power  
Of rain on grass, of dew on flower ;  
The fertilizing song be mine,  
Nut-flavored, racy, keen as wine.

Let some procreant truth exhale  
From me, before my forces fail ;  
Or ere the ecstatic impulse go,  
Let all my buds to blossoms blow.

If quick, sound seed be wanting where  
The virgin soil feels sun and air,  
And longs to fill a higher state,  
There let my meanings germinate.

Let not my strength be spilled for naught,  
But, in some fresher vessel caught,  
Be blended into sweeter forms,  
And fraught with purer aims and charms.

Let bloom-dust of my life be blown  
To quicken hearts that flower alone ;  
Around my knees let scions rise  
With heavenward-pointed destinies.

And when I fall, like some old tree,  
And subtle change makes mould of me,  
There let earth show a fertile line  
Whence perfect wild-flowers leap and shine.

## THE ARCHER.

THE joy is great of him who strays  
In shady woods on summer days,  
With eyes alert and muscles steady,  
His longbow strung, his arrows ready.

At morn he hears the woodthrush sing,  
He sees the wild rose blossoming,  
And on his senses, soft and low,  
He feels the brook-song ebb and flow.

Life is a charm, and all is good  
To him who lives like Robin Hood,  
Hearing ever, far and thin,  
Hints of the tunes of Gamelyn.

His greatest grief, his sharpest pain,  
Is (when the days are dark with rain)  
That for a season he must lie  
Inert, while deer go bounding by ;



Lounge in his lodge, and long and long  
For Allen a Dale's delightful song,  
Or smack his lips at thought of one  
Drink from the Friar's demijohn.

But when the sky is clear again,  
He sloughs his grief, forgets his pain,  
Hearing on gusts of charming weather  
The low laugh of his arrow feather !

## THE DEATH OF THE WHITE HERON.

(CYPRESS LAKE, FLORIDA.)

I PULLED my boat with even sweep  
Across light shoals and eddies deep,

Tracking the currents of the lake  
From lettuce raft to weedy brake.

Across a pool death-still and dim  
I saw a monster reptile swim,

And caught, far off and quickly gone,  
The delicate outlines of a fawn.

Above the marshy islands flew  
The green teal and the swift curlew ;

The rail and dunlin drew the hem  
Of lily-bonnets over them ;

I saw the tufted wood-duck pass  
Between the wisps of water-grass.

All round the gunwales and across  
I draped my boat with Spanish moss,

And, lightly drawn from head to knee,  
I hung gay air-plants over me ;

Then, lurking like a savage thing  
Crouching for a treacherous spring,

I stood in motionless suspense  
Among the rushes green and dense.

I kept my bow half-drawn, a shaft  
Set straight across the velvet haft.

Alert and vigilant, I stood  
Scanning the lake, the sky, the wood.

I heard a murmur soft and sad  
From water-weed to lily-pad,

And from the frondous pine did ring  
The hammer of the golden-wing.

62    *DEATH OF THE WHITE HERON*

On old drift-logs the bittern stood  
Dreaming above the silent flood ;

The water-turkey eyed my boat,  
The hideous snake-bird coiled its throat,

And birds whose plumage shone like flame, —  
Wild things grown suddenly, strangely tame, —

Lit near me ; but I heeded not :  
They could not tempt me to a shot.

Grown tired at length, I bent the oars  
By grassy brinks and shady shores,

Through labyrinths and mysteries  
Mid dusky cypress stems and knees,

Until I reached a spot I knew,  
Over which each day the herons flew.

I heard a whisper sweet and keen  
Flow through the fringe of rushes green,

The water saying some light thing,  
The rushes gayly answering.

The wind drew faintly from the south,  
Like breath blown from a sleeper's mouth,

And down its current sailing low  
Came a lone heron white as snow.

He cleft with grandly spreading wing  
The hazy sunshine of the spring ;

Through graceful curves he swept above  
The gloomy moss-hung cypress grove ;

Then gliding down a long incline,  
He flashed his golden eyes on mine.

Half-turned he poised himself in air,  
The prize was great, the mark was fair !

I raised my bow, and steadily drew  
The silken string until I knew

My trusty arrow's barb'd point  
Lay on my left forefinger joint, —

Until I felt the feather seek  
My ear, swift-drawn across my cheek :

64    *DEATH OF THE WHITE HERON*

Then from my fingers leapt the string  
With sharp recoil and deadly ring,

Closed by a sibilant sound so shrill,  
It made the very water thrill, —

Like twenty serpents bound together,  
Hissed the flying arrow's feather !

A thud, a puff, a feathery ring,  
A quick collapse, a quivering,

A whirl, a headlong downward dash,  
A heavy fall, a sullen splash, —

And like white foam, or giant flake  
Of snow, he lay upon the lake.

And of his death the rail was glad,  
Strutting upon a lily-pad ;

The jaunty wood-duck smiled and bowed ;  
The belted kingfisher laughed aloud,

Making the solemn bittern stir  
Like a half-wakened slumberer ;

And rasping notes of joy were heard  
From gallinule and crying-bird,

The while with trebled noise did ring  
The hammer of the golden-wing !

### A FLIGHT SHOT.

WE were twin brothers, tall and hale,  
Glad wanderers over hill and dale.

We stood within the twilight shade  
Of pines that rimmed a Southern glade.

He said: "Let's settle, if we can,  
Which of us is the stronger man.

"We'll try a flight shot, high and good,  
Across the green glade toward the wood."

And so we bent in sheer delight  
Our old yew bows with all our might.

Our long keen shafts, drawn to the head,  
Were poised a moment ere they sped.

As we leaned back a breath of air  
Mingled the brown locks of our hair.



We loosed. As one our bow-cords rang,  
As one away our arrows sprang.

Away they sprang ; the wind of June  
Thrilled to their softly whistled tune.

We watched their flight, and saw them strike  
Deep in the ground slantwise alike,

So far away that they might pass  
For two thin straws of broom-sedge grass !

Then arm in arm we doubting went  
To find whose shaft was farthest sent,

Each fearing in his loving heart  
That brother's shaft had fallen short.

But who could tell by such a plan  
Which of us was the stronger man ?

There at the margin of the wood,  
Side by side our arrows stood,

Their red cock-feathers wing and wing,  
Their amber nocks still quivering,

Their points deep-planted where they fell  
An inch apart and parallel !

We clasped each other's hands ; said he,  
"Twin champions of the world are we !"

## THE FAWN.

I LAY close down beside the river,  
My bow well strung, well filled my quiver.

The god that dwells among the reeds  
Sang sweetly from their tangled bredes ;

The soft-tongued water murmured low,  
Swinging the flag-leaves to and fro.

Beyond the river, fold on fold,  
The hills gleamed through a film of gold ;

The feathery osiers waved and shone  
Like silver threads in tangles blown.

A bird, fire-winged, with ruby throat,  
Down the slow, drowsy wind did float,

And drift and flit and stay along,  
A very focal flame of song.

A white sand-isle amid the stream  
Lay sleeping by its shoals of bream ;

In liliated pools, alert and calm,  
Great bass through lucent circles swam ;

And farther, by a rushy brink,  
A shadowy fawn stole down to drink,

Where tall, thin birds unbalanced stood  
In sandy shallows of the flood.

And what did I beside the river,  
With bow well-strung and well-filled quiver ?

I lay quite still with half-closed eyes,  
Lapped in a dream of Paradise,

Until I heard a bow-cord ring,  
And from the reeds an arrow sing.

I knew not of my brother's luck,  
If well or ill his shaft had struck ;

But something in his merry shout  
Put my sweet summer dream to rout,

And up I sprang, with bow half-drawn,  
And keen desire to slay the fawn.

But where was it ? Gone like my dream.  
I only heard the fish-hawk scream,

And the strong striped bass leap up  
Beside the lily's floating cup ;

I only felt the cool wind go  
Across my face with steady flow ;

I only saw those thin birds stand  
Unbalanced on the river sand,

Low peering at some dappled thing  
In the green rushes quivering.

## THE BLUE HERON.

WHERE water-grass grows overgreen  
On damp cool flats by gentle streams,  
Still as a ghost and sad of mien,  
With half-closed eyes the heron dreams.

Above him in the sycamore  
The flicker beats a dull tattoo ;  
Through pawpaw groves the soft airs pour  
Gold dust of blooms and fragrance new.

And from the thorn it loves so well,  
The oriole flings out its strong,  
Sharp lay, wrought in the crucible  
Of its flame-circled soul of song.

The heron nods. The charming runes  
Of Nature's music thrill his dreams ;  
The joys of many Mays and Junes  
Wash past him like cool summer streams.

What tranquil life, what joyful rest,  
To feel the touch of fragrant grass,  
And doze like him, while tenderest  
Dream-waves across my sleep would pass !

## THE BLUEBIRD.

WHEN ice is thawed and snow is gone,  
And racy sweetness floods the trees ;  
When snow-birds from the hedge have flown,  
And on the hive-porch swarm the bees, —  
Drifting down the first warm wind  
That thrills the earliest days of spring,  
The bluebird seeks our maple groves,  
And charms them into tasseling.

He sits among the delicate sprays,  
With mists of splendor round him drawn,  
And through the spring's prophetic veil  
Sees summer's rich fulfillment dawn :  
He sings, and his is nature's voice, —  
A gush of melody sincere  
From that great fount of harmony  
Which thaws and runs when spring is here.

Short is his song, but strangely sweet  
To ears weary of the low,



Dull tramp of Winter's sullen feet,  
Sandaled in ice and muffed in snow :  
Short is his song, but through it runs  
A hint of dithyrambs yet to be, —  
A sweet suggestiveness that has  
The influence of prophecy.

From childhood I have nursed a faith  
In bluebird's songs and winds of spring :  
They tell me after frost and death  
There comes a time of blossoming ;  
And after snow and cutting sleet,  
The cold, stern mood of Nature yields  
To tender warmth, when bare pink feet  
Of children press her greening fields.

Sing strong and clear, O bluebird dear !  
While all the land with splendor fills,  
While maples gladden in the vales  
And plum-trees blossom on the hills :  
Float down the wind on shining wings,  
And do thy will by grove and stream,  
While through my life spring's freshness runs  
Like music through a poet's dream.

## THE WABASH.

THERE is a river singing in between  
Bright fringes of pawpaw and sycamore,  
That stir to fragrant winds on either shore,  
Where tall blue herons stretch lithe necks, and  
lean  
Over clear currents flowing cool and thin  
Through the clean furrows of the pebbly floor.

My own glad river. Though unclassic, still  
Haunted of merry gods whose pipings fill  
With music all thy golden willow-brakes !  
Above thee halcyon lifts his regal crest ;  
The tulip-tree flings thee its flower-flakes,  
The tall flag over thee its lances shakes :  
With every charm of beauty thou art blest,  
O happiest river of the happy West !

## OKECHOBEE.

THY shadowy margin, O still, tropic lake,  
Is like a thought that hovers in the brain  
Beyond the reach of phrase to make it plain,  
Divinely sweet for its dim mystery's sake.  
The real and the ideal, matched so well  
In yonder palm-trees and their ghosts below,  
Have but a doubtful line between to tell  
That from a common root they do not grow !

The delicate shifting shades that cloud the  
    sheen

Of water too harmonious to flow,  
Flit over tufts of flags and willows green,  
Which feel not even the faintest summer swell.

. . . . .  
O Lake, thy beauty inexpressible is  
Except by some song-wrought antholysis !

## DROPPING CORN.

PRETTY Phœbe Lane and I,  
In the soft May weather,  
Barefoot down the furrows went  
Dropping corn together.

Side by side across the field  
Back and forth we hurried ;  
All the golden grains we dropped  
Soon the ploughshare buried.

Bluebirds on the hedges sat,  
Chirping low and billing ;  
“ Why,” thought I, “ not follow suit,  
If the maid is willing ? ”

So I whispered, “ Phœbe, dear,  
Kiss me ” — “ Keep on dropping ! ”  
Called her father from the plough ;  
“ There ’s no time for stopping ! ”

The cord was loosed, — the moment sped ;  
The golden charm was broken !  
Nevermore between us two  
Word of love was spoken.

What a little slip, sometimes,  
All our hope releases !  
How the merest breath of chance  
Breaks our joy in pieces !

Sorrow's cup, though often drained,  
Never lacks for filling ;  
And we can't get Fortune's kiss  
When the maid is willing !

## THE MORNING HILLS.

### I.

HE sits among the morning hills,  
His face is bright and strong ;  
He scans far heights, but scarcely notes  
The herdsman's idle song.

He cannot brook this peaceful life  
While battle's trumpet calls ;  
He sees a crown for him who wins,  
A tear for him who falls.

The flowery glens and shady slopes  
Are hateful to his eyes ;  
Beyond the heights, beyond the storms,  
The land of promise lies.

### II.

He is so old and sits so still,  
With face so weak and mild,

We know that he remembers naught  
Save when he was a child.

His fight is fought, his fame is won,  
Life's highest peak is past ;  
The laurel crown, the triumph-arch,  
Are worthless at the last.

The frost of age destroys the bay, —  
The loud applause of men  
Falls feebly on the palsied ears  
Of threescore years and ten.

He does not hear the voice that bears  
His name around the world ;  
He has no thought of great deeds done  
Where battle-tempests whirled ;

But evermore he is looking back,  
Whilst memory fills and thrills  
With echoes of the herdsman's song  
Among the morning hills.

## AT THE WINDOW.

I HEARD the woodpecker pecking,  
The bluebird tenderly sing ;  
I turned and looked out of my window,  
And lo, it was spring !

A breath from tropical borders,  
Just a ripple, flowed into my room,  
And washed my face clean of its sadness,  
Blew my heart into bloom.

The loves I have kept for a lifetime,  
Sweet buds I have shielded from snow,  
Break forth into full leaf and tassel  
When spring winds do blow.

For the sap of my life goes upward,  
Obeying the same sweet law  
That waters the heart of the maple  
After a thaw.



I forget my old age and grow youthful,  
    Bathing in wind-tides of spring,  
When I hear the woodpecker pecking,  
    The first bluebird sing.

## NOVEMBER.

A HINT of slumber in the wind,  
A dreamful stir of blades and stalks,  
As tenderly the twilight flows  
Down all my garden walks.

My robes of work are thrown aside,  
The odor of the grass is sweet ;  
The pleasure of a day well spent  
Bathes me from head to feet.

Calmly I wait the dreary change, —  
The season cutting sharp and sheer  
Through the wan bowers of death that fringe  
The border of the year.

And while I muse, the fated earth  
Into a colder current dips, —  
Feels winter's scourge, with summer's kiss  
Still warm upon her lips.

BETWEEN THE POPPY AND THE  
ROSE.

How tired ! Eight hours of racking work,  
With sharp vexations shot between !  
Scant wages and few kindly words, —  
How gloomy the whole day has been !  
But here is home. The garden shines,  
And over it the soft air flows ;  
A mist of chastened glory hangs  
Between the poppy and the rose.

The poppy red as ruby is,  
The rose pale pink, fullblown, and set  
Amid the dark rich leaves that form  
The strong vine's royal coronet ;  
And half-way o'er from this to that,  
In a charmed focus of repose,  
Two rare young faces, lit with love,  
Between the poppy and the rose.

Sweet little Jessie, two years old,  
Dear little Mamma, twenty-four,

Together in the garden walk

While evening sun-streams round them pour.

List ! Mamma murmurs baby-talk !

Hush ! Jessie's talk to laughter glows !

They both look heavenly sweet to me,

Between the poppy and the rose.

Two flakes of sunshine in deep shade,

Two diamonds set in rougher stone,

Two songs with harp accompaniment

Across a houseless desert blown, —

No, nothing like this vision is ;

How deep its innocent influence goes,

Sweeter than song or power or fame,

Between the poppy and the rose !

Between the poppy and the rose,

A bud and blossom shining fair, -

A childlike mother and a child,

Whose own my very heart-throbs are !

Oh, life is sweet, they make it so ;

Its work is lighter than repose :

Come anything, so they bloom on

Between the poppy and the rose.

### SOLACE.

THOU art the last rose of the year,  
By gusty breezes rudely fanned :  
The dying Summer holds thee fast  
In the hot hollow of her hand.

Thy face pales, as if looking back  
Into the splendor of thy past  
Had thrilled thee strangely, knowing that  
This one long look must be the last.

Thine essence, that was heavenly sweet,  
Has flown upon the tricky air :  
Fate's hand is on thee ; drop thy leaves,  
And go among the things that were.

Be must and mould, be trampled dust,  
Be nothing that is fair to see :  
One day, at least, of glorious life  
Was thine of all eternity.

Be this a comfort : crown and lyre  
And regal purple last not long ;  
Kings fall like leaves, but thy perfume  
Strays through the years like royal song.

## HO, FOR THE KANKAKEE!

Ho, for the marshes, green with Spring,  
Where the bitterns croak and the plovers  
pipe,  
Where the gaunt old heron spreads his wing,  
Above the haunt of rail and snipe ;  
For my gun is clean and my rod's in trim,  
And the old, wild longing is roused in me ;  
Ho, for the bass-pools cool and dim !  
Ho, for the swales of the Kankakee !

Is there other joy like the joy of a man  
Free for a season with rod and gun,  
With the sun to tan and the winds to fan,  
And the waters to lull, and never a one  
Of the cares of life to follow him,  
Or to shadow his mind while he wanders free ?  
Ho, for the currents slow and dim !  
Ho, for the fens of the Kankakee !

A hut by the river, a light canoe,  
My rod and my gun, and a sennight fair —  
A wind from the South, and the wildfowl due  
Be mine. All 's well. Comes never a care.  
A strain of the savage fires my blood,  
And the zest of freedom is keen in me;  
Ho, for the marsh and the liliated flood!  
Ho, for the sloughs of the Kankakee!

Give me to stand where the swift currents  
rush,  
With my rod all astrain and a bass coming  
in,  
Or give me the marsh, with the brown snipe  
aflush,  
And my gun's sudden flashes and resonant  
din;  
For I am tired of the desk, and tired of the  
town,  
And I long to be out, and I long to be free:  
Ho, for the marsh, with the birds whirling  
down!  
Ho, for the pools of the Kankakee!



### ATALANTA.

WHEN Spring grows old, and sleepy winds  
Set from the south with odors sweet,  
I see my love, in green, cool groves,  
Speed down dusk aisles on shining feet.

She throws a kiss and bids me run,  
In whispers sweet as roses' breath;  
I know I cannot win the race,  
And at the end I know is death.

But joyfully I bare my limbs,  
Anoint me with the tropic breeze,  
And feel through every sinew thrill  
The vigor of Hippomenes.

O race of love! we all have run  
Thy happy course through groves of spring,  
And cared not, when at last we lost,  
For life or death, or anything!

## THE SENTINEL.

WHAT of this Hour that passes  
With a shimmer of gold and blue ?  
O Love, through your crystal glasses  
What seems this hour to you ?  
I see the gold and blue  
Of the beautiful thing that passes  
On the wind through the summer grasses,  
But it is nothing new !

Halt ! sweet Hour, I stand on guard ;  
You cannot pass this way !  
My heart (my master) bids me ward  
His outer court to-day ;  
Stop where you are, and stay.  
Your face would witch full many a guard,  
But I am old and stern and hard ;  
Beware, I say !

What of this bright Hour, standing  
Just out before the gate,

A passage of right demanding  
Because it groweth late ?  
O Love, must I ope the gate ?  
See, see the bright thing standing,  
Sharp, scintillant, commanding !  
Is it a fate ?

## AT NIGHT.

THE moon hangs in a silver mist,  
The stars are dull and thin ;  
Sleep, bending low, spreads loving arms  
To fold the whole world in.  
The air is like a spell ; the hills  
Waver, now seen, now lost ;  
The pallid river wanders by,  
A vast unquiet ghost.

A hornëd owl on silent wings,  
From out a cavernous place,  
Speeds, like a bolt of darkness hurled  
Athwart the shining space  
Above the vale from wood to wood,  
And leaves no trace behind, —  
Like some dark fancy flung across  
A pure and peaceful mind !

## IN EXILE.

### I.

THE singing streams, and the deep, dark wood  
Beloved of old by Robin Hood,

Lift me a voice, kiss me a hand,  
To call me from this younger land.

What time by dull Floridian lakes,  
What time by rivers fringed with brakes,

I blow the reed, and draw the bow,  
And see my arrows hurtling go

Well sent to deer or wary hare,  
Or wildfowl whistling down the air ;

What time I lie in shady spots  
On beds of wild forget-me-nots,

That fringe the fen lands insincere  
And boggy marges of the mere,

Whereon I see the heron stand,  
Knee-deep in sable slush of sand, —

I think how sweet if friends should come  
And tell me England calls me home.

## II.

I keep good heart, and bide my time,  
And blow the bubbles of my rhyme ;

I wait and watch, for soon I know  
In Sherwood merry horns shall blow,

And blow and blow, and folk shall come  
To tell me England calls me home.

Mother of archers, then I go  
Wind-blown to you with bended bow,

To stand close up by you and ask  
That it be my appointed task

To sing in leal and loyal lays  
Your matchless bowmen's meed of praise ;

And that unchallenged I may go  
Through your green woods with bended bow, —

Your woods where bowered and hidden stood  
Of old the home of Robin Hood.

Ah, this were sweet, and it will come  
When merry England calls me home !

## III.

Perchance, long hence, it may befall,  
Or soon, mayhap, or not at all,

That all my songs nowhither sent,  
And all my shafts at random spent,

Will find their way to those who love  
The simple force and truth thereof ;

Wherefore my name shall then be rung  
Across the land from tongue to tongue,

Till some who hear shall haste to come  
With news that England calls me home.

I walk where spiced winds raff the blades  
Of sedge-grass on the summer glades ;

Through purfled blades that fringe the mere  
I watch the timid tawny deer

Set its quick feet and quake and spring,  
As if it heard some deadly thing,

When but a brown snipe flutters by  
With rustling wing and piping cry ;

I stand in some dim place at dawn,  
And see across a forest lawn

The tall wild turkeys swiftly pass  
Light-footed through the dewy grass ;

I shout, and wind my horn, and go  
The whole morn through with bended bow,

Then on my rest I feel at noon  
Sown pulvil of the blooms of June ;

I live and keep no count of time,  
I blow the bubbles of my rhyme :



These are my joys till friends shall come  
And tell me England calls me home.

## IV.

The self-yew bow was England's boast ;  
She leaned upon her archer host, —

It was her very life-support  
At Crecy and at Agincourt,

At Flodden and at Halidon Hill,  
And fields of glory redder still !

O bows that rang at Solway Moss !  
O yeomanry of Neville's cross !

These were your victories, for by you  
Breastplate and shield were cloven through ;

And mailed knights at every joint  
Sore wounded by an arrow point,

Drew rein, turned pale, reeled in the sell,  
And, bristled with arrows, gasped and fell !

O barb'd points that scratched the name  
Of England on the walls of fame !

O music of the ringing cords  
Set to grand song of deeds, not words !

O yeomen ! for your memory's sake,  
These bubbles of my rhyme I make, —

Not rhymes of conquest stern and sad,  
Or hoarse-voiced like the Iliad,

But soft and dreamful as the sigh  
Of this sweet wind that washes by, —

The while I wait for friends to come  
And tell me England calls me home.

## V.

I wait and wait ; it would be sweet  
To feel the sea beneath my feet,

And hear the breeze sing in the shrouds  
Betwixt me and the white-winged clouds, —

To feel and know my heart should soon  
Have its desire, its one sweet boon,

To look out on the foam-sprent waste  
Through which my vessel's keel would haste,

Till on the far horizon dim  
A low white line would shine and swim ;

The low white line, the gleaming strand,  
The pale cliffs of the Mother-land !

O God ! the very thought is bliss,  
The burden of my song it is,

Till over sea song-blown shall come  
The news that England calls me home !

## VI.

Ah, call me, England, some sweet day  
When these brown locks are silver gray,

And these brown arms are shrunken small,  
Unfit for deeds of strength at all ;

When the swift deer shall pass me by,  
Whilst all unstrung my bow shall lie,

And birds shall taunt me with the time  
I wasted making foolish rhyme,

And wasted blowing in a reed  
The runes of praise, the yeoman's meed,

And wasted dreaming foolish dreams  
Of English woods and English streams,

Of grassy glade and queachy fen  
Beloved of old by archer men,

And of the friends who would not come  
To tell me England called me home.

#### VII.

Such words are sad : blow them away  
And lose them in the leaves of May,

O wind ! and leave them there to rot,  
Like random arrows lost when shot ;

And here, these better thoughts, take these  
And blow them far across the seas,

To that old land and that old wood  
Which hold the dust of Robin Hood !

Say this, low-speaking in my place :  
“The last of all the archer race

“Sends this his sheaf of rhymes to those  
Whose fathers bent the self-yew bows,

“And made the cloth-yard arrows ring  
For merry England and her king,

“Wherever Lion Richard set  
His fortune's stormy banneret ! ”

Say this, and then, oh, haste to come  
And tell me England calls me home !

## BEFORE DAWN.

A KEEN, insistent hint of dawn  
Fell from the mountain height ;  
A wan, uncertain gleam betrayed  
The faltering of the night.

The emphasis of silence made  
The fog above the brook  
Intensely pale ; the trees took on  
A haunted, haggard look.

Such quiet came, expectancy  
Filled all the earth and sky :  
Time seemed to pause a little space ;  
I heard a dream go by !

## SPRING'S TORCH-BEARER.

ORIOLE — athlete of the air —  
Of fire and song a glowing core,  
From tropic wildernesses fair,  
Spring's favorite lampadephore,

A hot flambeau on either wing  
Ripples as you pass me by ;  
'T is seeing flame to hear you sing,  
'T is hearing song to see you fly.

Below the leaves in fragrant gloom,  
Cool currents lead you to your goal,  
Where bursting jugs of rich perfume  
Down honeyed slopes of verdure roll.

In eddies, round some hummock cold,  
Where violets weave their azure bredes,  
You flash a torch o'er rimy mould  
And rouse the dormant balsam seeds.

Upon the sassafras a flare,  
And through the elm a wavering sheen,  
A flicker in the orchard fair,  
A flame across the hedgerow green.

Your voice and light are in my dream  
Of vanished youth, they warm my heart ;  
With every chirrup, every gleam,  
Sweet currents from old fountains start.

I take me wings and fly with you,  
Once more the boy of long ago.  
Oh, days of bloom ! Oh, honey-dew !  
Hark ! how the flutes of fairy blow !

You whisk wild splendors through the trees,  
And send keen fervors down the wind,  
You singe the jackets of the bees,  
And trail an opal mist behind.

When flowery hints foresay the berry,  
On spray of haw and tuft of brier,  
Then, wandering incendiary,  
You set the maple swamps afire !



## THE ASSAULT.

(*Amazilia cerviniventris.*)

A WINGED rocket, curving through  
An amethyst trajectory,  
Blew up the magazines of dew  
Within the fortress of the bee.

Some say the tulip mortar sent  
The missile forth ; I do not know ;  
I scarcely saw which way it went,  
Its whisk of flame surprised me so.

I heard the sudden hum and boom,  
And saw the arc of purple light  
Across the garden's rosy gloom ;  
Then something glorious blurred my sight !

The bees forgot to sound alarm,  
And did not pause their gates to lock ;

A topaz terror took by storm  
The tower of the hollyhock.

Above the rose a halo hung,  
As if a bomb had been a gem,  
And round the dahlia's head was swung  
A blade that looked a diadem.

What more befell I cannot say ;  
By ruby glint and emerald gleam  
My sense was dazed ; the garden lay  
Around me like an opal dream !

## ODE — SPRING.

PARAPHRASED FROM ANACREON.

WHEN Zephyr on his drooping wings  
Soft sighs and spicy fragrance brings,  
How sweet to wander on the lawns  
Wrapped in the soft green grass of spring  
And dewy splendors of the dawns.

How sweet with some dear, blushing maid  
To sit in cooling waves of shade  
And talk, while o'er her shoulders fair  
Falls the full glory of her hair !

### LAZING.

GIVE me a day, let business right itself,  
Give me one day to drift in idleness  
Along the shores of dreamland. Let me build  
My castles in the air and dwell in them  
A space, while yet the happy May-winds blow.

The oriole is come, and in the thorn  
Among the greening buds the catbird sings ;  
The fields are sweet, and in the sky is set  
A tranquil glory. Let me go and lie  
Upon the grass while happy May-winds blow.

I'd rather rest to-day than be a king,  
For what are kings but slaves with golden  
chains ?

Talk not of work, this is too sweet a day  
To bow one's neck and tamely take the yoke,  
And I will not, while happy May-winds blow.

This is the month of wooing ; let me sit  
Close hand in hand with Nature, as a man,  
Being deep in love, would sit beside a maid,  
And ask for rest as lovers ask for love,  
In tender whispers, while the May-winds blow.

And if I fall asleep in Nature's arms,  
Like any lover in the arms of love,  
Let no one passing by awaken me,  
For only once, in all the rolling year,  
Comes holiday while happy May-winds blow.



## TO A WILD FLOWER.

IN the green solitudes  
Of the deep, shady woods  
Thy lot is kindly cast, and life to thee  
Is like a gust of rarest minstrelsy.

The winds of May and June  
Hum many a tender tune,  
Blowing above thy leafy hiding-place,  
Kissing, all thrilled with joy, thy modest face.

About thee float and glow  
Rare insects, hovering low,  
And round thee glance thin streams of delicate  
grass,  
Plashing their odors on thee as they pass.

The sheen of brilliant wings,  
Songs of shy, flitting things,  
The low, mysterious melodies that thrill  
Through every summer wood, thy sweet life  
fill.

O bloom ! all joy is thine,  
All loves around thee shine ;  
The thousand hearts of Nature throb for thee,  
Her thousand voices praise thee tenderly.

O bloom of purest glory,  
Flower of love's gentlest story,  
Forever keep thy petals fresh and fair,  
Forever send thy sweetness down the air !

I 'll put thee in my song,  
With all thy joys along,  
At which some sunny hearts may sunnier grow,  
And frozen ones may gently slip their snow.

## CERES.

THE wheat was flowing ankle-deep  
Across the field from side to side ;  
And, dipping in the emerald waves,  
The swallows flew in circles wide.

The sun, a moment flaring red,  
Shot level rays athwart the world,  
Then quenched his fire behind the hills,  
With rosy vapors o'er him curled.

A sweet, insinuating calm, —  
A calm just one remove from sleep,  
Such as a tranquil watcher feels,  
Seeing mild stars at midnight sweep

Through splendid purple deeps, and swing  
Their old, ripe clusters down the west  
To where, on undiscovered hills,  
The gods have gathered them to rest, —



A calm like that hung over all  
The dusky groves, and, filtered through  
The thorny hedges, touched the wheat  
Till every blade was bright with dew.

Was it a dream? We call things dreams  
When we must needs do so, or own  
Belief in old, exploded myths,  
Whose very smoke is long since flown.

Was it a dream? Mine own eyes saw,  
And Ceres came across the wheat  
That, like bright water, dimpled round  
The golden sandals of her feet.

## AOEDE.

HER mouth is like a dewy rose  
That blows, but will not open quite ;  
Like flame turned down, her long hair glows  
In thin, curled currents softly bright ;  
Her breasts and throat are marble-white.

Her lips will not have any kiss ;  
They draw away, they flash a smile, —  
Half bashfulness, half scorn it is,  
A silent ripple. . . . All the while  
She meditates some charming wile.

Her feet below her drapery shine  
Like roses under clinging sprays,  
When, late in summer, lolls the vine ; —  
Like flag-leaves in long August days,  
To moods perverse her body sways.

Her breath is keen and sweet as nard ;  
Her limbs move like a stream flowing

Among smooth stones. A lithe young pard  
Is not more quick than she to spring  
To guard or capture anything.

She is a snare, a subtle lure, —  
A lily on a whirlpool's rim.  
She is as dangerously pure  
As fire. . . . She revels in a dream  
Wherein the daintiest fancies swim.

She feasts upon my pain, and turns  
Her pink ear up to catch my sighs,  
And every word I speak. She yearns  
To see me die. . . . Her great gray eyes  
Are deep as seas and over-wise.

Ah, over-wise those strange deep eyes !  
They master me, they take my breath ;  
In them a nameless mystery lies. . . .  
They burn with life that joy bringeth,  
They gleam through shining mists of death.

## DIANA.

SHE had a bow of yellow horn,  
Like the old moon at early morn.

She had three arrows strong and good,  
Steel set in feathered cornel wood.

Like purest pearl her left breast shone  
Above her kirtle's emerald zone ;

Her right was bound in silk well-knit,  
Lest her bowstring should sever it.

Ripe lips she had, and clear gray eyes,  
And hair pure gold blown hoiden-wise

Across her face, like shining mist  
That with dawn's flush is faintly kissed.

Her limbs how matched and round and fine !  
How free like song ! how strong like wine !

And, timed to music wild and sweet,  
How swift her silver-sandaled feet !

Single of heart and strong of hand,  
Wind-like she wandered through the land,

No man (or king or lord or churl)  
Dared whisper love to that fair girl.

And woe to him who came upon  
Her nude, at bath, like Acteon !

So dire his fate that one who heard  
The flutter of a bathing bird,

What time he crossed a breezy wood,  
Felt sudden quickening of his blood ;

Cast one swift look, then ran away  
Far through the green, thick groves of May ;

Afear'd, lest down the wind of spring  
He 'd hear an arrow whispering !

## GARDEN STATUES.

### I.

#### EROS.

O NAKED baby Love among the roses,  
Watching with laughing gray-green eyes for me,  
Who says that thou art blind? Who hides  
from thee?

Who is it in his foolishness supposes  
That ever a bandage round thy sweet face  
closes

Thicker than gauze? I know that thou canst  
see!

Thy glances are more swift and far more sure  
To reach their goal than any missile is,  
Except that one which never yet did miss,  
Whose slightest puncture not even death can  
cure,

Whose stroke divides the heart with such a bliss  
As even the strongest trembles to endure, —

Thine arrow that makes glad the saddest  
weather

With the keen rustle of its purple feather !

## II.

## APHRODITE.

And thou whose tresses like straw-colored gold  
Above the scarlet gladiole float and shine, —  
Whose comely breasts, whose shoulders fair  
and fine,

Whose fathomless eyes and limbs of heavenly  
mould,

Thrill me with pain and pleasures manifold,  
Racy of earth, yet full of fire divine, —  
Art thou unclean as that old Paphian dream ?

I know thou art not ; for thou camest to me  
Out of the white foam-lilies of the sea,  
Out of the salt-clear fountain's clearest stream,  
The embodiment of purest purity,  
As healthful as the sun's directest beam,  
So life-giving that up beneath thy feet,  
Wherever thou goest, the grass-flowers bubble  
sweet !

## III.

## PSYCHE.

And thou among the violets lying down,  
With gracile limbs curled like a sleeping child's,  
And dewy lips, and cheeks drawn back with  
    smiles,  
And bright hair wrapped about thee for a gown,  
Does some implacable fate with scowl and  
    frown  
Weave for thy feet its dark insidious wiles?  
Not so, for I have known thee from thy youth  
A singer of sweet tunes and sweeter words,  
To merry tinkling of soft cithern chords.  
Thine is the way of happiness and truth,  
And all thy movements are as swift and smooth  
As through the air the strongest flying bird's.  
Infinite joy about thy presence clings,  
Unspeakable hope falls from thy going wings.

## IV.

## PERSEPHONE.

And thou that by the poppy bloom dost stand  
Robed in the dusky garments of the South,



With slumber in thine eyes and on thy mouth,  
Sandaled with silence, having in thy hand  
A philter for death and a sleep-bearing wand,  
Bringest thou the immitigable fire and drouth ?  
No ; for thy shadowy hair is full of balm,  
Thy philter is delight, thy wand gives rest.  
See, now I fold my hands upon my breast !  
Come, touch me with thy cool and soothing  
palm,

Lull me to measureless sleep, ineffable calm,  
And bear me to thy garden in the west,  
Beyond whose ever-clouded confine lies  
A sweet illimitable paradise !

## THE TULIP.

(*Caveat regina.*)

SEEING, above dark spikes of green,  
Your great bold flowers of gold and red,  
I think of some young heathen queen  
With blazing crown upon her head, —

Some beautiful barbaric thing,  
Clothed in rich garments, emerald zoned,  
Whom simple folk, half worshiping  
And half in fear, have crowned and throned.

You will not deign to give the breeze  
The slightest nod as it goes by ;  
You will not move a leaf to please  
The drowsy gorgeous butterfly.

With measureless nonchalance and pride,  
You take the humming bird's caress ;

The brown melodious bee must bide  
Your haughty, arrogant willfulness !

You will not even stoop to hear  
The whisper of the adoring grass ;  
The violets droop their heads in fear,  
The beetles grumble as they pass.

Beware, O queen, some day ere long  
All these may drop their fealty,  
And for redress of causeless wrong  
Uprise in passionate mutiny.

Ah, then what rapturous sound of wings,  
Applauding when your throne goes down !  
What cheering when the rude breeze springs,  
And whisks away your withered crown !

WRITTEN ON A FLY-LEAF OF  
THEOCRITUS.

THOSE were good times, in olden days,  
Of which the poet has his dreams,  
When gods beset the woodland ways,  
And lay in wait by all the streams.

One could be sure of something then  
Severely simple, simply grand,  
Or keenly, subtly sweet, as when  
Venus and Love went hand in hand.

Now I would give (such is my need)  
All the world's store of rhythm and rhyme  
To see Pan fluting on a reed  
And with his goat-hoof keeping time !

## EOS.

SHE stood between two gold pillars ;  
    Behind her lay a misty field,  
And sunlight smote with great splendor  
    Athwart her silver shield.

From her high place she shot an arrow  
    That broke the slumber of the sea ;  
And one she shot upon a mountain,  
    And one flew full at me.

Then the sea began singing, and uplifted  
    Its face made glorious for a kiss ;  
And the mountain on its green summit  
    Built fires of sacrifice.

Then her little feet, gold-sandaled,  
    Stepped down the current of a breeze,  
And stood upon a river flowing  
    Broad like the Euphrates.

And the hills cried, " It is Eos ! "

And the skylark soared away ;

And the little fire in the east enkindled,

Flamed into perfect day !

## A BREATH OF MORN.

Flow in upon my soul, O wind of morn !

Touch me with ancient tenderness and faith,  
Thou perfumed waft from fields of blooming  
corn !

Woo me, lure me from this poisoned shore of  
Death.

I hear far voices, sweet as flutes, somewhere,  
Calling me into the darkness, and I know  
Their soft insidious languor on the air  
Comes from the land of burial, damp and low.

Blow on me, O thou current of sweet youth !  
Come back dear days of boyhood and bright  
dreams :  
Arise again, thou white, clear bloom of truth ;  
Babble once more, O careless morning  
streams !

Kiss me, warm lips of purity and love ;  
Sing to me, lasses from the meadow lands ;

Bind me with blossoms from the sacred grove  
Wherein the temple of my childhood stands.

Lo ! I am sick to death of Manhood's ways,  
And long to be a fighting man no more ;  
No more for me the clanging iron days ;  
So let me live my happy maytime o'er.

Blow on me, wind, out of the early morn,  
And bear away from me the wear and fret ;  
Bring me the perfume of the blooming corn,  
And I will sing through many a springtime  
yet !



## TWILIGHT.

So short the time, and yet it seems so long,  
Since last I saw thee, O my beautiful !  
The very thought is resonant with song,  
And wraps my spirit in a tender lull.

I count the hours till I shall come again :  
Each moment seems a little rose of time ;  
Each gust of wind thrills gently with a strain  
Of soft, bewildering melody and rhyme.

There comes a perfume from the sunset land,  
And from the sunset vapor comes a voice ;  
Some one in evening's gateway seems to stand,  
And o'er a flood of glory shout, " Rejoice ! "

I seem to look through all the lapsing years,  
And see my path wind through a holy land,  
While wondrous as the music of the spheres  
Is the soft murmur of Time's golden sand.

I see my springs go by, a golden train ;  
I see my summers with their corn and wines ;  
I see my autumns come and come again,  
And roar my winters through the windy  
pines !

## SEVEN GOLD REEDS.

SEVEN gold reeds grew tall and slim,  
Close by the river's beaded brim.

Syrinx, the naiad, flitted past ;  
Pan, the goat-hoofed, followed fast.

Oh, such a race was joy to see,  
Swift as the flight of bird or bee.

As lightly beat the girl's white feet  
They made strange music low and sweet ;

So heavily trod the lusty Pan  
His hoofs clashed loudly as he ran.

He spread his arms to clasp her there  
(Just as she vanished into air),

And to his bosom, warm and rough,  
Drew the gold reeds close enough.

Then the wind's low voice began  
To hum in the furry ears of Pan.

Out of green bark he made a tether,  
And bound seven joints of the reeds together,

And blew a tune so sweet and clear  
That all the wild things came to hear.

. . . . .  
So, to this day, the poet's fire  
Springs out of his unslaked desire,

When Love on wingëd feet has fled,  
And seven gold reeds are clasped instead !

## THE ORPHIC LEGACY.

WHEN steadily blew the wind from shores of  
Thrace,  
And stirred the vines of Lesbos, loaded down  
With racy fruit all round Methymna town,  
Lo, floating on the water, came a dead man's  
face.

And from the pallid, parted lips thereof  
Issued strange singing of idyllic song,  
As it lay tossing white-capped waves among,  
Upturned to the sweet sky that smiling bent  
above.

What wondrous flotsam ! And a golden shell  
Drifted beside it, stringed with silver chords,  
Playing fit accompaniment to the words  
That through the sounds of winds and swash-  
ing sea did swell.

"Sweetest of all the Ægean Isles," it said,  
"Oh, bury me beneath thy fruitful vines,

And pour libations of thy choicest wines ;  
For, lo, I am the far-famed Thracian singer's  
head !

“ And I am torn of jealous women's hands,  
Because to my dead love I held me true ;  
Me the Bacchantes, over-drunken, slew ;  
Now, bodiless, I drift upon thine island sands.

“ This my gold shell I bring as gift to thee ;  
And thou shalt see full soon its precious  
use,  
When Sappho's voice awakes the lyric  
muse,  
And with his seven-stringed lute Terpander  
charms the sea.”

Then through the splendid weather maids  
there came,  
With loving men, and walked upon the  
beach,  
Arm twined in arm, and murmuring each to  
each,  
Slow burning up their hearts in love's sweet,  
pitiless flame.

But when the tender gusts of Orphic song  
Smote on their ears with lyre-accompani-  
ment,  
Far down the beach's sandy slope they went,  
And found the singing head and tunèd shell  
among

Sea-drifts that on the foamy surf-line lay.  
What jetsam ! but they hailed it with de-  
light ;  
They buried the singing head from sight,  
And to Methymna took the sweet-stringed shell  
away.

They hung it in the temple tenderly  
(Where all untouched, its chords kept quiv-  
ering  
And with rare music never ceased to ring,  
That filled the temple as with moanings of the  
sea).

Thence flaws of song, with charming chords  
between,  
Swept through the olive groves and dusky  
vines,

And through the mastic and Aleppo  
pines  
To the rose-bannered garden walls of Mity-  
lene.



## PAN IN THE ORCHARD.

HE carved a flute of elder green,  
And notched it well and true,  
Then pursed his lips and puffed his cheeks  
And merrily he blew.

For it was spring-time holiday,  
A sun-tanned boy was he,  
With russet freckles on his face  
And a patch upon his knee.

The apple boughs above him flung  
Their tangled sprays on high,  
With one dark, bristly blue-jay nest  
Rough-sketched against the sky.

He knew the secrets of the grass,  
The burden of the hour,  
He saw the fierce, bluff bumblebee  
Touse many a clover flower.

Orphaned and poor as poor could be,  
The years before him lay  
Dark billows of an unknown sea,  
No light-house on the way.

And yet, and yet his elder flute  
Could bring him comfort true ;  
He pursed his lips and puffed his cheeks  
And blew, and blew, and blew !

## OUT OF THE SOUTH.

A MIGRANT song-bird I,  
Out of the blue, between the sea and the sky,  
Landward blown on bright, untiring wings ;  
Out of the South I fly,  
Urged by some vague, strange force of destiny,  
To where the young wheat springs,  
And the maize begins to grow,  
And the clover fields to blow.

I have sought,  
In far wild groves below the tropic line,  
To lose old memories of this land of mine ;  
I have fought  
This vague, mysterious power that flings me  
forth  
Into the North ;  
But all in vain. When flutes of April blow  
The immemorial longing lures me, and I go.

I go, I go,  
The sky above, the sea below,  
And I know not by what sense I keep my way,  
Slow winnowing the ether night and day ;  
Yet ever to the same green, fragrant maple  
grove,  
Where I shall swing and sing beside my love,  
Some irresistible impulse bears me on,  
Through starry dusks and rosy mists of dawn,  
And flames of noon and purple films of rain ;  
And the strain  
Of mighty winds hurled roaring back and forth,  
Between the caverns of the reeling earth,  
Cannot bewilder me.  
I know that I shall see,  
Just at the appointed time, the dogwood blow,  
And hear the willows rustle and the mill-stream  
flow.

The very bough that best  
Shall hold a perfect nest  
Now bursts its buds and spills its keen per-  
fume ;  
And the violets are in bloom,  
Beside the boulder, lichen-grown and gray,

Where I shall perch and pipe,  
Till the dewberries are ripe,  
And our brood has flown away,  
And the empty nest swings high  
Between the flowing tides of grass and the  
dreamy violet sky.

I come, I come !  
Bloom, O cherry, peach, and plum !  
Bubble brook, and rustle corn and rye !  
Falter not, O Nature, nor will I.  
Give me thy flower and fruit,  
And I 'll blow for thee my flute ;  
I 'll blow for thee my flute so sweet and clear,  
This year,  
Next year,  
And many and many a blooming coming year,  
Till this strange force  
No more aloft shall guide me in my course,  
High over weltering billows and dark woods,  
Over Mississippi's looped and tangled floods,  
Over the hills of Tennessee,  
And old Kentucky's greenery,  
In sun, in night, in clouds, and forth  
Out of the South into the North,

To the spot where first the ancestral nest was  
    swung,  
Where first the ancestral song was sung,  
    Whose shadowy strains still ravish me  
    With immemorial melody.

## A CREOLE SLAVE-SONG.

*(Ah, lo zo-zo chan' dan' branche.)*

What bird is that, with voice so sweet,  
Sings to the sun from yonder tree ?  
What girl is that so slim and fleet,  
Comes through the cane her love to meet ?  
*Foli zo-zo*, sing merrily.  
The pretty girl she comes to me !

What wind is that upon the cane ?  
What perfume from a far-off rose  
Fills me with dreams ? What strange, vague  
pain  
Stirs in my heart ? What longing vain  
Is this that through my bosom goes ?  
Oh, south wind, perfume and desire,  
You kiss, you soothe, you burn like fire !

Ah, no ! Ah, no ! It is a cheat.  
There is no bird ; my love comes not ;

The wind chills me from head to feet,  
And oh, it brings no perfume sweet.

My slender girl the white man bought,  
And took her far across the bay —  
I cannot cut the cane to-day !

I cannot cut the cane to-day —

*O zo-zo, moqueur*, come and sing !

O warm wind, through the cane-field stray,  
Wave the long moss so soft and gray !

I have no heart for anything ;  
But life was Heaven and work was play  
When my love loved me every day !

White man, how I worked for you,

When I was young and blithe and strong !

The earth was green, the sky was blue,  
My love's eyes were as bright as dew ;

And life was like the *zo-zo's* song !

But you — you sold my love away —  
I cannot cut the cane to-day !

I did not dream a slave could be

A man, and right a grievous wrong.



I writhed and bore your cruelty ;  
I felt the soul go out of me ;  
    And yet, I was so lion-strong  
I could have torn your heart away —  
I cannot cut the cane to-day !

Freedom ! I feel it when too late,  
    Like Spring wind on a blasted tree,  
A waft of mockery and hate !  
Bring back my chains, O cruel Fate !  
    Bring youth and slavery back to me ;  
Bring back the lash, the hound, the pain,  
So that my own love come again !

But hark ! A gentle voice afar  
    Calls me to go, I know not where —  
Yes, past the sun and past the star,  
Into God's land. A golden car  
    And milk-white horses — *she* is there !  
So sweet — I dream — I float away —  
I cannot cut the cane to-day !

A MORNING PRAYER.

O BREEZE !

Thou dewy, cool, sweet current of delight,  
    Appease  
This longing for the ripe fruit of the right ;  
    Winnow my soul  
And flood my heart's cold caves with charity,  
    And roll  
This burden of the love of sin from me !

O sky !

Pour thy vast cup of purity on me,  
    That I  
May sound the flawless note of liberty,  
    As I stand  
Waiting to see the flower of sunrise blow,  
Waiting to feel the fresher currents flow  
    Into this morning land.

O sea !

Thou weltering giant, lend thy stormy voice  
    To me,

That I this day may make the earth rejoice  
With a sky-filling, world-o'erwhelming song,  
The tempest song of Freedom blowing down  
the walls of Wrong !

Lord God !

Thou master of the winds, the skies, the seas,  
Who trod

The valley of man's lowest miseries,

Lend me thy love, that I may love all men,  
That I may show all men the way of love,

From palace high to deepest prison-den ;

That I may prove

How Brotherhood is Freedom's other name,

How Freedom's other name is but the Word,

And that Word is the Lord

Come down again.

Amen.

## FULL-FLEDGED.

(*Une barbe de jeune dieu.*)

Is all discovery made?  
Is the hand of Conquest stayed?  
Are all the heroes dead, all epics told?  
Is Fame's grand tower no more  
On any height or shore?  
Is the bard's Excalibur worn thin and dull and  
old?

O for a sweet, strange waft —  
A thrilling, hopeful draught  
From a land where no man's feet were ever  
set;  
Where nameless wild birds sing,  
And the woods and everything  
With fragrant, honey-flavored dews are wet!

We build our ships in vain,  
If no new shores we gain.  
Though back and forth we track that Genoese

Who found fresh, wholesome room  
For Freedom's root and bloom,  
Yet shall we long to sail the unknown seas !

Where shall I lay my head ?  
What grass shall be my bed ?  
What holy, unsullied grove shall shadow me ?  
Somewhere, somewhere I know,  
Untasted fountains flow  
And winds blow off an undiscovered sea !

The clarion is whist ;  
No knight rides down the list ;  
High courage is but dust on rusted shields ;  
Where grandest deeds were done,  
Most glorious battles won,  
Dull peasants plow in poor and arid fields.

Old Homer and old wine,  
And Shakespeare the divine,  
And women for whose sake the world was  
changed, —  
All these are of the past ;  
Romance has breathed her last ;  
Genius, with lamp and lyre, through every  
grove has ranged.

The jaded worshipers,  
The priests and followers  
Of the high God, no fresh gift-offerings bring  
From full-fed flocks and herds,  
But, mumbling unmeaning words,  
Burn fleshless bones and impotent censers  
swing.

Love walks not anywhere ;  
Venus, no longer fair,  
Into some lonely place has crept away ;  
The dryad and the fawn  
And the river-gods are gone,  
And in the woods no more the lusty satyrs stray.

But my young limbs are strong,  
My throat thirsts for a song !  
The meanings and the potencies of youth  
Are gathering in my reins  
And throbbing in my veins ;  
I pant and pine for deep clean springs of Truth !

I will not have the lute,  
Nor that old, worm-bitten flute  
Bequeathed by gods to the dull line of bards.

Charmed reeds of song there are  
By happy streams afar,  
And I shall cut mine own, despite what demon  
guards !

Ready, clear-eyed, alert,  
Mine own I shall assert,  
Repeating no man's manner, no man's note ;  
But gathering from primal sources  
The pure and subtle forces  
That shall with rarest resonance flood my throat.

I cannot stand and wait  
I have no faith in Fate.  
The sinews of my body, lithe and clean,  
Promise a better turn  
Than all the stars that burn,  
As o'er Morn's outmost rosy rim I lean.

I will not look behind ;  
But down some brisk, sharp wind,  
Exulting, into the future I shall spring,  
Brown-limbed, anointed, free,  
To breast swift floods and see  
What wider view Time's highest tide shall bring !

I shall not tire or fail ;  
Strange essence shall exhale  
(Suggesting life immortal) from my song,  
And all the world shall smile,  
Half-owning for a while  
The influence of the healthful and the strong !

I shall break every chain,  
To farthest heights attain,  
And drink from wells no face has bent above.  
Oh ! from what heavenly place  
Shall leap to my embrace  
The warm embodiment of innocent love ?



## THE FINAL THOUGHT.

WHAT is the grandest thought  
Toward which the soul has wrought ?  
Has it the epic form,  
And the power of a storm ?  
Comes it of prophecy  
(That borrows light of uncreated fires),  
Or of transmitted strains of memory  
Sent down through countless sires ?

I tiptoe on the verge  
Of the Future, and I urge  
Into vast space the cry of my despair  
(Which, like a sea-gull lost in upper air,  
Glides weakly on and on) ;  
But whither is it gone,  
This straying cry with human anguish fraught ?  
What is the final thought ?

Which way are my feet set ?  
Through infinite changes yet

Shall I go on,  
Nearer and nearer drawn  
To Thee,  
God of eternity?  
How shall the human grow,  
By changes fine and slow,  
To Thy perfection from the life-dawn sought?  
What is the highest thought?

Ah, these dim memories  
Of when Thy voice spake lovingly to me,  
Under the Eden trees,  
Saying: "Lord of all creation thou shalt  
be,"

How they haunt me and elude —  
How they hover, how they brood,  
On the horizon, fading yet dying not!  
What is the final thought?

What if I once did dwell  
In the lowest dust germ-cell,  
A faint fore-hint of life called forth of God,  
Waxing and struggling on,  
Through the long, flickering dawn,  
The awful while His feet earth's bosom trod?

What if He shaped me so,  
And caused my life to blow  
Into the full soul-flower in Eden-air ?  
Lo ! now I am not good,  
And I stand in solitude,  
Calling to Him (and yet He answers not) :  
What is the final thought ?

What myriads of years up from the germ !  
What countless ages back from man to  
worm !  
And yet from man to God, oh help me now !  
A cold despair is beading on my brow !  
I may see Him, and seeing know Him not !  
What is the highest thought ?

Oh, higher than the skies  
My ecstatic prayers arise !  
The stars hear them go by  
Into the regions of Eternity —  
The angels meet them wandering after Him,  
Begging for just one ray  
Of perfect light across the spaces dim  
To guide me on my long and lonely  
way.

Oh, lead me, I am blind !  
Back, back, until I find  
The rapture-haunted spot,  
Where still the all-creative Essence fills  
Forms (out of dead clay wrought)  
With godlike souls and heaven-aspiring wills —  
Back to the highest thought !

A fragrant breath goes by ;  
A subtile waft, from some far paradise,  
Blows on me fitfully,  
And colors, half unseen, allure my eyes,  
All sightless though they be ;  
And so my heart is filled with wild desire,  
And all my soul is like a flaring fire !  
What is this flame in which my life is caught ?  
Is it the highest thought ?

“ Blasphemer, hush !  
The universe would rush  
To be a part of thee, if thou couldst know  
The garden where God’s flowers of wisdom  
blow !  
Cry not to Him  
Across the spaces dim ;

Dare not to touch His ether with thy breath,  
Thou bearer of the ancient curse of death !

Prayer shall avail thee not :  
Shrink from the final thought ! ”

So comes, at last,  
The answer from the Vast. . . .  
Not so, there is a rush of wings —  
Earth feels the presence of invisible things,  
Closer and closer drawn  
In fragrant mists of dawn !  
One dies to conquer Death  
And to burst the awful tomb, —  
Lo, with His dying breath  
He blows love into bloom !  
Love ! faith is born of it !  
Death is the scorn of it !  
It fills the earth and thrills the heaven above,  
And God is love,  
And life is love, and, though we heed it not,  
Love is the final thought.

## NECTAR AND AMBROSIA.

If I were a poet, my sweetest song  
Should have the bouquet of scuppernong,  
With a racy smack in every line  
From the savage juice of the muscadine.

The russet persimmon, the brown papaw,  
The red wild plum and the summer haw,  
Serviceberries and mandrake fruit,  
Sassafras bark and ginseng root,  
Should make my verse pungent and sweet by  
    turns ;  
And the odor of grass and the freshness of  
    ferns,  
The kernels of nuts and the resins of trees,  
The nectar distilled by the wild honey-bees,  
Should be thrown in together, to flavor my  
    words  
With the zest of the woods and the joy of the  
    birds !

Who sings by note, from the page of a book,  
So sweet a tune as the brawl of a brook?  
Shall Homer, or shall Anacreon  
Suggest as much as the wind or the sun?

Give me a shell from the sea so green,  
Cut me a flute from the Aulocrene,  
Give me Nature's sweets and sour,  
Her barks and nuts, her fruits and flowers;  
And all the music I make shall be  
Good as the sap of the maple-tree,  
Whilst a rare bouquet shall fill my song  
From the muscadine and the scuppernong.



## A DREAM OF ROMANCE.

THE day is but a breezy dream,  
The sky is like a bloom ;  
Life flows, a fragrant, bubbling stream,  
Along a liliated flume.

The wandering butterfly is lost  
In films of mystery,  
From supple flower to flower is tossed  
The worried bumblebee.

On high some idle spirit sings,  
Half sleeping, as it flies,  
Dropping from its charmed wings  
The dews of Paradise.

The pines are dozing, and the sea  
Is murmuring in its sleep ;  
All round the sky rim drowsily  
Some shadowy wonders creep.



The mosses drop their curtains low,  
The far ships settle down,  
And tenderly the Gulf winds blow,  
O'er Bay Saint Louis town.

And lo! am I a mote to dance  
And shimmer here and there,  
Where faded beams of old romance  
Strike slantwise through the air.

A weltering sound, remote and vast,  
Comes to my drowsy ear ;  
The Gulf waves rolling from the past  
Suggest the buccaneer.

A corsair sloop, hull down, retires  
With mysteries in her hold ;  
Her sails, against the wizard fires  
Of morn, are torn and old.

The buccaneer ! The buccaneer !  
My boyhood dreams come true ;  
What wild uproar is this I hear  
Across the waters blue ?

“Welcome ! my brawny, bearded one,  
Salute !” the caverns boom,  
And the merchantmen, far scattered, run  
To give his ship sea room.

He answers with a growling throat ;  
Out leaps his rusty blade,  
And one dull, echoing thunder-note  
Bounds from the carronade.

Lo ! all the world stands by to gaze  
And lean and look askance,  
What time the sturdy tars upraise  
The banner of romance.

Merrily, merrily, sing the crew ;  
Dusky and grim are they,  
Against the islands soft and blue  
And the grizzly ocean spray.

What is her name ? What is her name ?  
This ship so dark and strong.  
Oh, she was christened Lady Fame,  
And built by King o’ Song.

And she was manned by frowzy men,  
Bohemians eke, who love  
To fight at odds, like one to ten,  
And reck not where they rove.

And who is captain, tell us true,  
Of this good Lady Fame?  
Shouts every tar of all the crew:  
"WILL SHAKESPEARE is his name!"

Oh, welcome, goodly ship, in haste  
To bring us prize and cheer  
From all the hoards that tempt the taste  
Of lawless buccaneer!

Ay, we will build us crafts galore,  
Like Shakespeare's they shall be,  
And we will plunder every shore  
And every ship at sea.

All round the deep, wave-tossed and blown,  
Led by the Lady Fame,  
Our fleet shall make the world its own,  
Reckless of shame or blame.

.

The South, the North, the East, the West,  
Our shout and rout shall hear ;  
Oh, who shall foil, or who arrest  
The ruthless buccaneer ?

'T was thus I dreamed, one balmy day,  
When dim ships went, hull down,  
Against the sky line far away,  
Off Bay Saint Louis town.

There sapphire islands, held aloof  
In films of dream and chance,  
Between sea floor and blue sky roof,  
Are steeped in wild romance.

So in this town I linger long,  
And watch and wait — alack !  
Never a breath of golden song  
Can blow the old time back !

Oh, leave me thus, a mote to dance  
And shimmer here and there,  
Where faded beams of old romance  
Strike slantwise through the air !

IN THE HAUNTS OF BASS AND  
BREAM.

I.

DREAMS come true, and everything  
Is fresh and lusty in the spring.

In groves that smell like ambergris,  
Wind-songs, bird-songs, never cease.

Go with me down by the stream,  
Haunt of bass and purple bream ;

Feel the pleasure, keen and sweet,  
When the cool waves lap your feet ;

Catch the breath of moss and mould,  
Hear the grosbeak's whistle bold ;

See the heron all alone  
Midstream on a slippery stone,

Or, on some decaying log,  
Spearing snail or water-frog.

See the shoals of sun-perch shine  
Among the pebbles smooth and fine,

Whilst the sprawling turtles swim  
In the eddies cool and dim !

II.

The busy nuthatch climbs his tree,  
Around the great bole spirally,

Peeping into wrinkles gray,  
Under ruffled lichens gay,

Lazily piping one sharp note  
From his silver mailed throat ;

And down the wind the catbird's song  
A slender medley trails along.

Here a grackle chirping low,  
There a crested vireo ;

Deep in tangled underbrush  
Flits the shadowy hermit-thrush ;

Coos the dove, the robin trills,  
The crows caw from the airy hills ;

Purple finch and pewee gray,  
Bluebird, swallow, oriole gay, —

Every tongue of Nature sings ;  
The air is palpitant with wings.

Halcyon prophecies come to pass  
In the haunts of bream and bass.

III.

Bubble, bubble, flows the stream,  
Like an old tune through a dream.

Now I cast my silken line ;  
See the gay lure spin and shine,

While with delicate touch I feel  
The gentle pulses of the reel.

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Halcyon laughs and cuckoo cries ;  
Through its leaves the plane-tree sighs.

Bubble, bubble, flows the stream,  
Here a glow and there a gleam ;

Coolness all about me creeping,  
Fragrance all my senses steeping, —

Spicewood, sweet-gum, sassafras,  
Calamus and water-grass,

Giving up their pungent smells,  
Drawn from Nature's secret wells ;

On the cool breath of the morn,  
Perfume of the cock-spur thorn,

Green spathes of the dragon-root,  
Indian turnip's tender shoot,

Dogwood, red-bud, elder, ash,  
Snowy gleam and purple flash,

Hillside thickets, densely green,  
That the partridge revels in !



IV.

I see the morning-glory's curl,  
The curious star-flower's pointed whorl ;

Hear the woodpecker, rap-a-tap !  
See him with his cardinal's cap !

And the querulous, leering jay,  
How he clamors for a fray !

Patiently I draw and cast,  
Keenly expectant till, at last,

Comes a flash, down in the stream,  
Never made by perch or bream ;

Then a mighty weight I feel, —  
Sings the line and whirs the reel !

V.

Out of a giant tulip-tree  
A great gay blossom falls on me ;

Old gold and fire its petals are,  
It flashes like a falling star.

A big blue heron flying by  
Looks at me with a greedy eye.

I see a striped squirrel shoot  
Into a hollow maple root ;

A bumblebee with mail all rust,  
And thighs puffed out with anther-dust,

Clasps a shrinking bloom about,  
And draws her amber sweetness out.

VI.

Bubble, bubble, flows the stream,  
Like a song heard in a dream.

A white-faced hornet hurtles by,  
Lags a turquoise butterfly, —

One intent on prey and treasure,  
One afloat on tides of pleasure !

Sunshine arrows, swift and keen,  
Pierce the burr-oak's helmet green.

VII.

I follow where my victim leads  
Through tangles of rank water-weeds,

O'er stone and root and knotty log,  
O'er faithless bits of reedy bog.

I wonder, will he ever stop?  
The reel hums like a humming top!

Through graceful curves he sweeps the line,  
He sulks, he starts, his colors shine,

Whilst I, all flushed and breathless, tear  
Through lady-fern and maidenhair,

And in my straining fingers feel  
The throbbing of the rod and reel!

A thin sandpiper, wild with fright,  
Goes into ecstasies of flight;

A gaunt green bittern quits the rushes,  
The yellow-throat its warbling hushes ;

Bubble, bubble, flows the stream,  
Like an old tune through a dream !

VIII.

At last he tires, I reel him in ;  
I see the glint of scale and fin.

The crinkled halos round him break,  
He leaves gay bubbles in his wake.

I raise the rod, I shorten line,  
And safely land him, — he is mine !

IX.

The belted halcyon laughs, the wren  
Comes twittering from his bushy den ;

The turtle sprawls upon its log,  
I hear the booming of a frog.

Liquidambar's keen perfume,  
Sweet-punk, calamus, tulip-bloom ;

Dancing wasp and dragon-fly,  
Wood-thrush whistling tenderly ;

Damp cool breath of moss and mould,  
Noontide's influence manifold ;

Glimpses of a cloudless sky, —  
Soothe me as I resting lie.

Bubble, bubble, flows the stream,  
Like low music through a dream.

TO A REALIST.

A CROSSBOW old, with lathe and gaffle grim,  
And carven stock, hung in a castle hall —  
Mere bricabrac, but on the distance dim  
It sketched De Jourdan's quarrel, Richard's  
fall.

A curious ballad written by Villon  
(The sweet old thief) — the page was wan  
and sere ;  
But genius had set a glow thereon  
Like memory's flush on snows that fell last  
year.

A broken plow beside a hedgerow flung  
Amid the flowering weeds of early June,  
Told of poor Burns, who from the furrow sung  
The " Banks of Ayr " and " Braes o' Bonnie  
Doon."

A fossil skeleton, delicate and rare,  
A bird (held fast in rock for ages long)  
Freed by the quarrymen. I heard the air  
Eons ago thrill to its morning song!

A southern zittern found at Avignon;  
Broken its keys with pearls and opals set;  
Its strings were rust, its wreathed sound-board  
gone,  
But chords of passion wrung it fret by  
fret.

A leathern bottle, wrinkled, black and old,  
And dry as dust of Eden's apple bloom —  
Ah, but the philter that it used to hold  
Haunted it with the ghost of strange per-  
fume.

A phrase by Sappho, or a violin  
Made at Cremona — all the bits of clay  
That Palissy burned deathless color in —  
The crudest charcoal sketches of Millet, —

How rich in charm, how redolent and ripe  
And fertile is the purple mood they bring!

The heroes fight again, Pan blows his pipe,  
And from the sacred groves the Muses sing.

Time spares the germs that subtle genius needs ;  
Forth from the blue of distance they are sent ;  
And poor indeed is he who never heeds  
What precious hints fall from the firmament.

Aloft, arear, in caverns dark, profound,  
Where no dull commonplace has ever been,  
The golden web of genius is wound,  
Which all the thronging world is tangled in.

Genius, that wind-worn reed, unsightly, rude,  
Notched by some strong, untutored artisan ;  
That golden lyre, that lute of jeweled wood,  
That syrinx blown by furry lips of Pan !

Ah, friend, as you read Keats one starry night,  
While on the world lay dreams and mystery,  
You felt a thrill, trembled, and cried outright :  
“ Young god ! Strange boy ! Let go the  
heart of me ! ”



## AMERICA.

Low-HUNG in darkness, steeped in tyranny,  
The earth was but a prison-pen for man,  
When a swift impulse leaped from sea to sea,  
And round the sodden zones a flash of fervor  
ran.

A throb of God's great heart with sympathy  
Shook all the world. The torn sky and the  
stars  
Draped the majestic form of Liberty,  
The while around the West she built her  
golden bars.

There was a sound of thunder rolling far,  
When Freedom's forest-altar was begun,  
A song of star that answered unto star,  
When Freedom's heaven-high temple in the  
West was done !

Done? Oh, never done! the builder buildeth  
fair,  
Stone upon stone, that all the world may  
know;  
Higher and higher, in purer veins of air,  
The parapets of love, the towers of beauty  
grow.

The slave whose ear feels yet the post and  
nail,  
The serf in some Siberian hell, the oppressed  
Of rack-rent, and the debtor in the jail,  
All pray with hopeful faces yearning to the  
West.

Reality of life's divine romance  
Befalls what time the broken chains crash  
down;  
And lo! full manhood, leaping from a trance  
Shakes off the chrysalis shell of trodden clod  
and clown.

Oh, brothers, come! The breath of heaven is  
here!  
One draught can make the slave and master  
one!

The grace of liberty softens year by year,  
And in a richer flood the stream of life flows  
on.

But come not here to batter and debase,  
Nor hoping to reach license unconfined ;  
No alien hand our inscriptions may efface,  
Justice may be, but vigilant Freedom is not,  
blind !

Come rather as the bridegroom to the bride,  
Or as a man made free to freeborn man,  
Love-blown across the ocean wild and wide,  
Upon our shores, to be a true American !

And join our song, oh, every alien tongue,  
Make thunder-music on our highest wall,  
While hearts of kings are faint and terror-wrung,  
And all the olden thrones are toppling to  
their fall !

America, new gospel bearer, hail !  
Thou second coming of the loving Lord !  
Thy thousand years of glory cannot fail,  
Thou dewy, bloom-sweet resurrection of  
God's word !

Thy destiny the Father's fingers wove,  
The spell of power is on thee. Sweet and  
strong  
Flames in thine eyes the fire of heavenly love,  
And from thy brimming heart leaps love's  
immortal song !

## AN ADDRESS

BY AN EX-CONFEDERATE SOLDIER, TO THE  
GRAND ARMY OF THE REPUBLIC.

### I.

I WAS a rebel, if you please,  
A reckless fighter to the last,  
Nor do I fall upon my knees  
And ask forgiveness for the past.

A traitor? / A traitor? No!  
I was a patriot to the core;  
The South was mine, I loved her so,  
I gave her all, — I could no more.

You scowl at me. And was it wrong  
To wear the gray my father wore?  
Could I slink back, though young and strong,  
From foes before my mother's door?

My mother's kiss was hot with fight,  
My father's frenzy filled his son,

Through reeking day and sodden night  
My sister's courage urged me on.

And I, a missile steeped in hate,  
Hurled forward like a cannon-ball  
By the resistless hand of fate,  
Rushed wildly, madly through it all.

I stemmed the level flames of hell,  
O'er bayonet bars of death I broke,  
I was so near when Cleburne fell,  
I heard the muffled bullet stroke !

But all in vain. In dull despair  
I saw the storm of conflict die ;  
Low lay the Southern banner fair,  
And yonder flag was waving high.

God, what a triumph had the foe !  
Laurels, arches, trumpet-blare ;  
All around the earth their songs did go,  
Thundering through heaven their shouts did  
tear.

My mother, gray and bent with years,  
Hoarding love's withered aftermath,

Her sweet eyes burnt too dry for tears,  
Sat in the dust of Sherman's path.

My father, broken, helpless, poor,  
A gloomy, nerveless giant stood,  
Too strong to cower and endure,  
Too weak to fight for masterhood.

My boyhood's home, a blackened heap  
Where lizards crawled and briars grew,  
Had felt the fire of vengeance creep,  
The crashing round-shot hurtle through.

I had no country, all was lost,  
I closed my eyes and longed to die,  
While past me stalked the awful ghost  
Of mangled, murdered Liberty.

The scars upon my body burned,  
I felt a heel upon my throat,  
A heel that ground and grinding turned  
With each triumphal trumpet note.

"Grind on !" I cried, "nor doubt that I,  
(If all your necks were one and low

As mine is now) delightedly  
Would cut it by a single blow ! ”

## II.

That was dark night ; but day is here,  
The crowning victory is won ;  
Hark, how the sixty millions cheer,  
With Freedom's flag across the sun !

*I* a traitor ! Who are *you*  
That dare to breathe that word to me ?  
*You* never wore the Union blue,  
No wounds attest *your* loyalty !

I do detest the sutler's clerk,  
Who skulked and dodged till peace had  
come,  
Then found it most congenial work  
To beat the politician's drum.

I clasp the hand that made my scars,  
I cheer the flag my foemen bore,  
I shout for joy to see the stars  
All on our common shield once more.



I do not cringe before you now,  
Or lay my face upon the ground ;  
I am a man, of men a peer,  
And not a cowering, cudgeled hound !

I stand and say that you were right,  
I greet you with uncovered head,  
Remembering many a thundering fight,  
Where whistling death between us sped.

Remembering the boys in gray,  
With thoughts too deep and fine for words,  
I lift this cup of love to-day  
To drink what only love affords.

Soldiers in blue, a health to you !  
Long life and vigor oft renewed,  
While on your hearts, like honey-dew,  
Falls our great country's gratitude.

## AN INCIDENT OF WAR.

OUR new flagbearer, pale and slim,  
A beardless youth of quiet mien,  
Much chaffed at by old soldiers grim  
(Before in battle he had been),  
Hid the heroic fire in him.

He sang old hymns and prayed at night ;  
“ A bad sign,” quoth the sergeant bold,  
“ Camp-meeting tunes before a fight  
Loosen a soldier’s moral hold,  
And pluck beats prayer a mighty sight.”

The boy blushed red, but tenderly  
He to the sergeant turned and said :  
“ That God should mind me what am I ?  
And yet by Him my soul is fed —  
Send this to mother if I die.”

The sergeant, with a knowing look,  
And winking at the rest, replied :

"Yes, son, I'll give your ma the book" —

Just then a volley rattled wide  
And one great gun the valley shook.

The pale flagbearer disappeared.

"Gone to the rear," the sergeant said ;  
"Praying would make a Turk afeared ;  
Those lonesome tunes have turned his  
head" —

And then the tide of battle neared.

We formed in haste and dashed away,  
Across the field, our place to fill ;  
At first a skirmish, then a spray  
Of cannon smoke upon a hill  
Flanked by long lines in close array.

Down charged the foe ; we rushed to meet,  
We filled the valley like a sea,  
The cannons flashed a level sheet  
Of blinding flame, the musketry  
Cut men as sickles cut the wheat !

Oh, then we shouted ! More and more  
The fervor of our courage rose,

As through our solid columns tore  
The death hail's crashing, gusty blows,  
And louder leaped the cannon roar !

But how could human courage meet  
That icy flood? All, all in vain  
Our counter charge ; in slow retreat  
We crossed the tumbled heaps of slain,  
With grave-pits yawning at our feet !

"Rally ! For shame !" rang out a cry  
Forth from the thundering vortex cast ;  
A voice so steady, clear, and high,  
It sounded like a bugle-blast  
Blown from the lips of victory.

We paused, took hope, yelled loud, and so  
Renewed the charge, all as one man,  
Leaped where Death's waves had thickest  
flow,  
And felt the breath of horror fan  
Our naked souls as cold as snow !

The volleys quickened, coalesced,  
Rolled deep, rocked earth and jarred the sky,

When lo ! our banner bearer pressed  
His standard forward, held it high  
And rode upon the battle's crest.

We saw him wave it over all ;  
Caught in the battle trough and dashed  
From side to side, it would not fall ;  
But like a meteor danced and flashed  
And reveled in the sulphurous pall !

We swept the field and won the hill ;  
Our flag flared out upon the crest,  
Where wavering, gasping, pale and chill,  
A dozen bullets through his breast,  
The slender hero held it still !

We leaped to lift his drooping head,  
The sergeant clasped him to his breast ;  
" I bore the flag," the low voice said,  
" And God bore me, now let me rest,"  
And so we laid him with the dead.

## TO THE SOUTH.

O SUBTLE, musky, slumbrous clime !

O swart, hot land of pine and palm,

Of fig, peach, guava, orange, lime,

And terebinth and tropic balm !

Land where our Washington was born,

When truth in hearts of gold was worn ;

Mother of Marion, Moultrie, Lee,

Widow of fallen chivalry !

No longer sadly look behind,

But turn and face the morning wind,

And feel sweet comfort in the thought :

*“ With each fierce battle’s sacrifice*

*I sold the wrong at awful price,*

*And bought the good ; but knew it not.”*

Cheer up ! Reach out ! Breathe in new life !

Brood not on unsuccessful strife

Against the current of the age ;

The Highest is thy heritage !

Leave off this death's-head scowl at Fate,  
And into thy true heart sink this :

*" God loves to walk where Freedom is ! "*

There is no sweet in dregs and lees ;  
There is no fruit on girdled trees.  
Plant new vineyards, sow new fields,  
For bread and wine the Future yields ;  
Out of free soil fresh spathes shall start ;  
Now is the budding-time of Art !

But hark ! O hear ! My senses reel !  
Some grand presentiment I feel !  
A voice of love, bouquet of truth,  
The quick sound of the feet of youth !

Lo ! from the war-cloud, dull and dense,  
Loyal and chaste and brave and strong,  
Comes forth the South with frankincense,  
And vital freshness in her song.  
The weight is fallen from her wings ;  
To find a purer air she springs  
Out of the Night into the Morn,  
Fair as cotton, sound as corn.

Hold ! Shall a Northman, fierce and grim,  
With hoary beard and boreal vim,  
Thus fling, from some bleak waste of ice,  
Frost-crystals of unsought advice

To those who dwell by Coosa's stream,  
Or on dark hummocks plant the cane  
Beside the lovely Pontchartrain,

Or in gay sail-boats drift and dream  
Where Caribbean breezes stray  
On Pensacola's drowsy bay ?

Not so ! I am a Southerner ;  
I love the South ; I dared for her  
To fight from Lookout to the sea,  
With her proud banner over me :  
But from my lips thanksgiving broke,  
As God in battle thunder spoke,  
And that Black Idol, breeding drouth  
And dearth of human sympathy  
Throughout the sweet and sensuous South,  
Was, with its chains and human yoke,  
Blown hellward from the cannon's mouth,  
While Freedom cheered behind the smoke !



## OUR LEGEND.

THE legend set upon our shield  
Brims with grand meaning : All in one,  
Hearts welded, souls together run  
At white heat on the battlefield !

One shining way for all to take,  
One oath, one hope, one purpose grand,  
One flag for all in all the land,  
Upheld by all for Freedom's sake.

One sign set in the central sky,  
Read of all men alike, a name  
Written in empyrean flame  
By the bold hand of Destiny !

That legend naught could dim or mar ;  
Though bathed in tears and hid in smoke,  
Forth from the focal storm it broke,  
A bow above the cloud of war.

We read it pensively and knew  
Some element of precious gain  
Had come to it from wounds and pain,  
And mightily its meaning grew.

And so we keep upon our shield  
The deathless legend : All in one,  
Hearts welded, souls together run  
At white heat on the battlefield.

A myriad songs, together thrown  
Across old gulfs of hate, are blent  
Like starlight in the firmament,  
And round the world in triumph blown.

Our starry unity of stars  
Gives man a manly masterhood,  
Our law of love engrossed in blood  
Is sealed with burning bullet scars !

## A TAUNT.

IN the oldest wood I know a brooklet,  
That bubbles over stones and roots,  
And ripples out of hollow places,  
Like music out of flutes.

There creeps the pungent breath of cedars,  
Rich coolness wraps the air about,  
Whilst through clear pools electric flashes  
Betray the watchful trout.

I know where wild things lurk and linger,  
In groves as gray and grand as Time ;  
I know where God has written poems  
Too strong for words or rhyme.

Come, let us go, each pulse is precious,  
Come, ere the day has lost its dawn ;  
And you shall quaff life's finest essence  
From primal flagons drawn !

Just for a day slip off the tether  
Of hothouse wants, and dare to be  
A child of Nature, strong and simple,  
Out in the woods with me.

Out in the woods, on freedom's bosom,  
We shall be worthy sons of men,  
Bred of remotest sires who bearded  
The satyr in his den.

Come, just a sip of the wild man's nectar  
Shall show you life from a point of view  
As old as the oldest stones of the moun-  
tains,  
And yet as fresh as dew!

Supple joints and bulging muscles,  
Sinews taut as the chords of a harp,  
Veins full-flushed, eyes clear as water,  
And all the senses sharp.

Who was Shakespeare? Where is Homer?  
Can Milton leap, or dance, or run?  
Should you care to cast a fly with Walton?  
Do you envy Napoleon?

What of this lore of buried thinkers ?

What of these classic depths and heights ?

Better one strong, bright, living creature

Than a myriad trilobites !

Ah, I see you scoff at my meaning,

You flaccid, indolent bookworm, you !

What would you give for my good digestion

And my nerve-cords sound and true ?

## MORNING DEW.

WHEN germs were quickening in the mould,  
And sap was rich and leaves were young,  
Deep in the fragrant wood a lute,  
As old as Time, was newly strung.

Some swift, divine, invisible hand,  
From fret to fret, tried all the chords,  
Until a tune, supremely sweet,  
Was set to immemorial words.

And then the wild bird sought its mate ;  
The lusty bee a-booming came ;  
The maples, filled with racy pangs,  
Let go their buds' imprisoned flame ;

A dreamy mystery veiled the sun ;  
Keen perfumes stole through glade and  
grove,  
And all the founts of Nature burst  
With sudden bubbling streams of love !

Ah ! passion, pure as morning dew,  
And fresh as breath of mint and thyme !  
Impulse of Spring, so new and true !  
Essence of innocence and prime !

I bowed my head and stilled my breath  
(For it was May and I was young),  
While to a tune supremely sweet  
Those immemorial words were sung.

## OLD ROCHON.

### I.

It was off the coast of the Terre aux Bœufs  
(And the breeze was brisk and the sea was  
rough)

That Gaspard Rochon, the buccaneer,  
Sailed his schooner, and right good cheer  
Had he on his table, with pipes and wine,  
As he feasted the mate of the Caroline.

### II.

The Caroline was a cruiser craft ;  
Rochon had raked her fore and aft,  
With cannon and with carronade,  
And had boarded her with pike and blade,  
Had pillaged and sunk her ; only the mate  
Was left to tell of his vessel's fate.

### III.

" You fought like a tiger," said old Rochon,  
" And I'll bet my schooner, the Gonfalon,



That you have heard the broadsides roar  
And the cutlasses clang ofttimes before."  
" Yes," growled the mate, " for many a year  
I 've battled with pirate and buccaneer."

IV.

" Drink and be merry," the outlaw said ;  
Drink to the living and drink to the dead.  
Drink pale sherry and drink old port !  
Eat and be merry, for life is short !  
Ay, drink like a fish and eat like a swine,  
For death may follow when pirates dine ! "

V.

" By the way," said the mate, " did you ever  
hear  
Of old Rochon, the buccaneer,  
Who used to sail the southern seas,  
With his rendezvous in the Florida keys ? "  
" Perchance I have," was the curt reply,  
With a savage gleam from the old man's eye.

VI.

" He was a terror," the mate went on,  
(All unaware that he faced Rochon)

"A cut-throat villain, a coward, too,  
With a stolen ship and a dastard crew ; —  
But his race is ended, he's feared no more  
By women and children on sea or shore."

## VII.

Over the mate, from head to heel,  
The pirate outflung a glance of steel.  
"Gaspard Rochon was a buccaneer  
Who never felt a touch of fear,"  
He said, "and I'd like to drink a cup  
With the tar who broke his cruising up !"

## VIII.

"Well," said the mate, "I ran him down,  
Burnt his vessels and razed his town ;  
Women and men, every devil's one,  
I killed of the gang, save old Rochon,  
Who made escape with loss of an ear."  
"And who cut that?" roared the buccaneer.

## IX.

"Who but I?" sang out the mate.  
"My cutlass glanced from his flinty pate  
And shaved his ear off, close and clean,

Which I have in my pouch as dry as a bean.”  
“Show me,” the old man stormed, “that ear  
Of old Rochon the buccaneer !”

## X.

“Here it is,” said the mate with pride,  
As out of the pouch that hung by his side  
He drew the relic and held it high,  
Like a bit of parchment brown and dry.  
“Ha ! ha ! ha !” laughed the buccaneer,  
“Eat and drink and have good cheer !

## XI.

“Drink pale sherry and drink red port !  
Eat and be merry, for life is short !”  
And then he hurried the mate on deck  
And tied a halliard around his neck,  
While the crew stood by to haul away,  
And a hunchback fifer began to play.

## XII.

For years the schooner *Gonfalon*  
Was sailed by the savage old Rochon,  
And wherever she went, at her topmast high  
Dangled a corpse against the sky —

A corpse that like a mummy grew  
And lightly about in the breezes blew !

## XIII.

Oh, red were the deeds of old Rochon  
And wild were the crew of the Gonfalon !  
In every nook of the Spanish main  
The cruisers cruised for them in vain,  
While they robbed and feasted and drank good  
    wine  
To the health of the mate of the Caroline !

## A STUDY FOR THE CRITICS.

A GREAT king once, so I have heard,  
Went out to hunt a singing-bird  
Whose voice should be so sweet and strong,  
So fraught with all the tricks of song,  
That they who heard it would confess  
The king's fine taste and perfectness  
Of judgment. And it came to pass  
That where the wind poured through the grass,  
Fringing a brooklet's sinuous way,  
He saw a bird demure and gray,  
Of awkward mien and sleepy eyed,  
Bathing in the crystal tide.

"O bird!" the king said, looking down,  
"A monarch I of high renown,  
Out searching for a singing-bird  
Whose voice, the sweetest ever heard,  
Shall cheer me in my hours of gloom,  
And coax my dead loves back to bloom."

"Take me, O king," the gray bird said.

"A sad and lonely life I've led,  
Singing with not a soul to hear,  
Pining for but one word of cheer."

"Thou!" cried the king, half in surprise,  
A sudden anger in his eyes —

"Thou insignificant, nameless bird!  
Thou ninny, hast thou never heard  
Of my grand palace and my throne  
Of pearl and gold and precious stone?  
Thou gray, sad eyed, presumptuous thing!  
*Thou* entertain a court and king!  
Begone! Say not another word:  
My cage must hold a royal bird."

There came a silken sound of wings  
Above the brooklet's murmurings;  
The wind fell still upon the grass  
To watch the gray bird upward pass;  
The sunlight milder, softer grew;  
The leaves took on a tenderer hue —  
As if all Nature, gently stirred,  
Bade farewell to the going bird.

The monarch stood with lips compressed,  
Regret and choler in his breast,  
While from the sky, well-sent and strong,  
Came back a Parthian shaft of song.

## THE GOLD-BIRD.

THE gold-bird came in the May morn  
Down fragrant billows of southwest weather :  
He fell, like a flame, in the sweet thorn, —  
He and his brown mate close together.

This was the promise of May-time ;  
Wind-song and bird-song sweetly flowing  
Over the thorn, like a love-rhyme,  
Where buds were breaking and flowers were  
blowing.

The gold-bird sang to his brown mate  
A song no words of mine may render,  
While she built a nest in the sweet thorn,  
In the dusky deeps of the thorn leaves  
tender.

This was the joy of the May-time :  
A bird like a flame and a love like fire,



The weather set to a soft tune  
Thrilled and filled with pure desire.

The gold-bird sat by his brown mate,  
Brooding their young through the drowsy  
weather,  
And when June came with its red heat  
The birds and their brood flew off together.

O sweet fulfillment of May-time !  
A gold-bird, a brown mate, a nest and  
fruition  
Of all the joys of a love-song !  
This was the whole of the gold-bird's mission.

## THE KINGFISHER.

HE laughs by the summer stream  
Where the lilies nod and dream,  
As through the sheen of water cool and clear  
He sees the chub and sunfish cutting sheer.

His are resplendent eyes ;  
His mien is kingliwise ;  
And down the May wind rides he like a king,  
With more than royal purple on his wing.

His palace is the brake  
Where the rushes shine and shake ;  
His music is the murmur of the stream,  
And that leaf-rustle where the lilies dream.

Such life as his would be  
A more than heaven to me :  
All sun, all bloom, all happy weather,  
All joys bound in a sheaf together.

No wonder he laughs so loud !  
No wonder he looks so proud !  
There are great kings would give their royalty  
To have one day of his felicity !

## UNAWARE.

THERE is a song some one must sing,  
In tender tones and low,  
With pink lips curled and quivering,  
And eyes with dreams aglow.

There is some one must hear the tune,  
And feel the thrilling words,  
As flowers feel, in early June,  
The wings of humming-birds.

And she who sings must never learn  
What good her song has done,  
Albeit the hearer slowly turn  
Him drowsily, as one

Who feels through all his being thrown  
The influence sweet and slight  
Of strange, elusive perfume, blown  
Off dewy groves by night !

## FAREWELL.

FAREWELL! It is no sorrowful word.

It has never had a pang for me.  
Sweet as the last song of a bird,  
Soft as a wind-swell from the sea,  
The word Farewell.

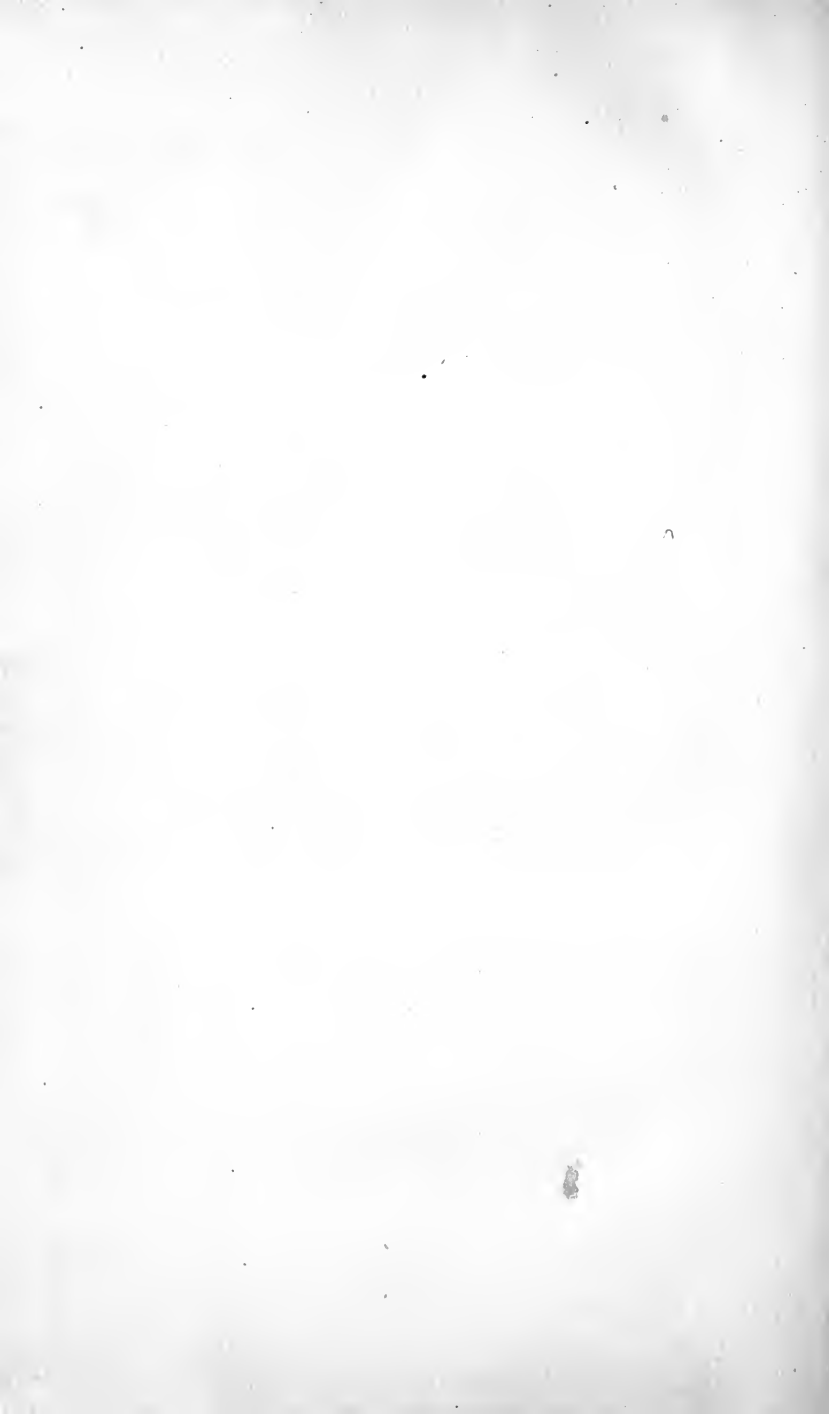
I part with you as oft before  
I've parted with dear friends and sweet,  
And now I shake (forevermore)  
Your memory's gold-dust from my feet.  
Farewell! farewell!

Soon I shall find a new sweet face,  
And other eyes as pure and strong  
As yours are now, and then a space  
Of life that ripples into song,  
And then farewell!

Farewell ! farewell ! Throw me a kiss !  
How fast the distance grows between !  
Now memory fades — a film of bliss,  
A far-off mist of silvery sheen :  
Good-by ! farewell !











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